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SCENES AND CHARACTERISTICS

OF

HINDOSTAN.

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SKETCHES

AND
ANGLO-INDIAN SOCIETY

BY EMMA ROBERTS

LONDON

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AUTHOR OF

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SCENES AND CHARACTERISTICS
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CHAPTER I.

ETAWAH.

IN the days of Moghul power, the native city of Etawah was a flourishing place, the abode of Omras and grandees belonging to the imperial court; but with the downfall of Moslem dominion it has sunk into insignificance, and possesses few, if any attractions, excepting to the artist, who cannot fail to admire a splendid ghaut, one of the finest on the river Jumna, and several picturesque buildings, which latter, however, are falling fast into decay. The cantonments in the neighbourhood are peculiarly desolate, and exhibit in full perfection the dreary features of a jungle station. Upon a wide sandy plain, nearly destitute of trees, half a dozen habitable bungalows lie scattered, intermixed with the ruins of others built for the accommodation of a larger garrison than is now considered necessary for the security of the place, a single wing of a regiment of sepoy being deemed sufficient for the performance of the duties of this melancholy outpost. The civilian attached to it, who discharges the joint office of judge and collector, is seldom resident,

preferring any other part of the district ; and the few Europeans condemned to linger out their three years of banishment in this wilderness, have ample opportunity to learn how they may contrive to exist upon their own resources. The bungalows of Etawah, though not in their primitive state (for upon the first occupation of these remote jungles, doors and windows were not considered necessary, a *jaump* or frame of bamboo covered with grass, answering the purpose of both), are still sufficiently rude to startle persons who have acquired their notions of India from descriptions of the City of Palaces. Heavy ill-glazed doors, smeared over with coarse paint, secure the interiors from the inclemencies of the cold, hot, and rainy seasons. The walls are mean and bare, and where attempts are made to colour them, the daubing of inexperienced workmen is more offensive to the eye than common whitewash. The fastenings of the doors leading to the different apartments, if there be any, are of the rudest description, and the small portion of wood employed is rough, unseasoned, and continually requiring repair.

The intercourse between the brute denizens of the soil and their human neighbours is of too close a nature to be agreeable. If the doors be left open at night, moveable lattices, styled *jaffrys*, must be substituted, to keep out the wolves and hyenas, which take the liberty of perambulating through the verandahs ; the gardens are the haunts of the porcupine, and panthers prowl in the ravines. The *chopper*, or thatch of a bungalow, affords commodious harbour for vermin of every description ;

but in large stations, which have been long inhabited by Europeans, the wilder tribes, retreating to more desolate places, are rarely seen ; squirrels or rats, with an occasional snake or two, form the population of the roof, and are comparatively quiet tenants. In the jungles, the occupants are more numerous and more various ; wild cats, *ghosaumps* (a reptile of the lizard tribe, as large as a sucking pig), *vis copras*, and others, take up their abode amid the rafters, and make wild work with their battles and their pursuit of prey. These intruders are only divided from the human inhabitants of the bungalow by a cloth stretched across the top of each room, from wall to wall, and secured by tapes tied in a very ingenious manner behind a projecting cornice ; this cloth forms the ceiling, and shuts out the unsightly rafters of the huge barn above ; but it proves a frail and often insufficient barrier ; the course of the assailants and the assailed may be distinctly traced upon its surface, which yields with the pressure of the combatants, shewing distinctly the outlines of the various feet. When it becomes a little worn, legs are frequently seen protruding through some aperture, and as the tapes are apt to give way during the rains, there is a chance of the undesired appearance of some hunted animal, which, in its anxiety to escape from its pursuers, falls through a yawning rent into the abyss below. Before the introduction of cloths, snakes and other agreeable visitants often dropped from the bamboos upon the persons of those who might be reposing beneath ; but although, where there are no dogs or cats to keep the lower story clear of intruders, the

dwellers of the upper regions will seek the ground-floor of their own accord, they cannot so easily descend as heretofore. Notwithstanding the intervention of the cotton canopy, however, there is quite sufficient annoyance without a closer acquaintance with the parties, for night being usually selected for the time of action, sleep is effectually banished by their gambols. The noise is sometimes almost terrific, and nervous persons, females in particular, may fancy that the whole of the machinery, cloth, fastenings, and all, will come down, along with ten thousand combatants, upon their devoted heads. The sparrows in the eaves, alarmed by the hubbub, start from their slumbers, and their chirping and fluttering increase the tumult. In these wild solitudes, individuals of the insect race perform the part of nocturnal disturbers with great vigour and animation. At night-fall a concert usually commences, in which the treble is sustained by crickets gifted with lungs far exceeding in power those of the European hearth, while the bass is croaked forth by innumerable toads. The bugle horns of the musquitos are drowned in the dissonance, and the gurgling accompaniment of the musk-rats is scarcely to be distinguished. In the midst of this uproar, should sleep, long-wooded, descend at last to rest upon the weary eyelids, it is but too often chased away by the yells of a wandering troop of jackalls, each animal apparently endeavouring to outshriek his neighbour. A quiet night in any part of India is exceedingly difficult of attainment; the natives, who sleep through the heat of the day, protract their vigils far beyond the midnight hour, and

however silent at other periods, are always noisy at night. Parties from adjacent villages patrol the roads, singing ; and during religious festivals or bridal revelries, every sort of discordant instrument, gongs, and blaring trumpets, six feet long, are brought in aid of the shouts of the populace.

Such is the usual character of a night in the jungles, and it requires nerves of no ordinary kind to support its various inflictions. Fortunately, the beds, as they are constructed and placed in India, afford a secure asylum from actual contact with invaders, the many-legged and many-winged host, which give so lively an idea of the plagues of Egypt. The couch occupies the centre of the floor, and is elevated to a considerable height from the ground ; the musquito-curtains, which are tightly tucked in all round, though formed of the thinnest and most transparent material, cannot easily be penetrated from without ; and, though bats may brush them with their wings, lizards innumerable crawl along the wall, and musk-rats skirt round the posts, admission to the interior is nearly impossible : on this account, as well as for the great preservative which they form against malaria, it is advisable to sleep under a musquito-net at all seasons of the year.

The noisome broods nurtured in the desolate places round Etawah, have not yet been taught to fly from the abode of the European ; but to counterbalance the annoyance which their presence occasions, the brighter and more beautiful inhabitants of the jungles fearlessly approach the lonely bungalow. In no other part of India, with the exception of the hill-districts, are more brilliant and interesting specimens of birds and insects

to be seen ; extremely small brown doves, with pink breasts, appear amid every variety of the common colour, green pigeons, blue jays, crested wood-peckers, together with an infinite number of richly-plumed birds, glowing in purple, scarlet, and yellow, less familiar to unscientific persons, flock around. A naturalist would luxuriate in so ample a field for the pursuit of his studies, and need scarcely go farther than the gardens to find those feathered wonders which are still imperfectly described in works upon ornithology. Here the lovely little tailor-bird sews two leaves together, and swings in his odorous nest from the pendulous bough of some low shrub.

The fly-catcher, a very small and slender bird of a bright green, is also an inhabitant of the gardens, which are visited by miniature birds resembling those of paradise, white, and pale brown, with tails composed of two long feathers. Nothing can be more beautiful than the effect produced by the brilliant colours of those birds, which congregate in large flocks ; the ring-necked paroquets, in their evening flight, as the sun declines, shew rich masses of green ; and the byahs, or crested-sparrows, whose breasts are of the brightest yellow, look like clouds of gold as they float along.

Numbers of aquatic birds feed upon the shores of the neighbouring Jumna, and the tremendous rush of their wings, as their mighty armies traverse the heavens, joined to other strange and savage sounds, give a painful assurance to those long accustomed to the quietude of sylvan life in England, that they are intruders on the haunts of wild animals, which have

never been subjected to the dominion of man. There is one sound which, though not peculiar to the jungles, is more wearying than in more thickly-inhabited places, on account of the extreme loudness of the note, and its never ceasing for a single instant during the day,—the murmuring of doves: the trees are full of them, and my ear, at least, never became reconciled to their continued moaning. At sunset, this sound is hushed, but the brief interval of repose is soon broken by the night-cries already described.

The roads around Etawah, if such they may (by courtesy) be called, are about the very worst in the world: they are the high-ways leading to the neighbouring stations, Mynpoorie, Futtighur, Agra, and Cawnpore, and afford no picturesque views within the range of a day's excursion. There is little temptation to drive out in a carriage in the evening, the favourite method of taking air and exercise in India; a few mango-groves, skirting villages surrounded by high walls of mud, probably as a security against the incursions of wild beasts, alone diversify the bare and arid plains, while the ruts threaten dislocation, and the dust, that plague of Hindostan, is nearly suffocating. The gardens afford a more agreeable method of passing the short period of day-light which the climate will permit to be spent in the open air. They are large and well planted; but the *mallees* (gardeners) are extremely ignorant of the European methods of cultivation, not having the same opportunity of acquiring knowledge as at larger stations. The pomegranate is of little value except for its rich red flowers; for the fruit—in consequence, no doubt, of either being badly

grafted or not grafted at all—when ripe, is crude and bitter ; it is greatly esteemed, however, by the natives, who cover the green fruit with clay, to prevent the depredations of birds. The pomegranates brought from Persia never appeared to me to merit their celebrity : whether any attempt has been made to improve them, by a graft from the orange, I know not, but I always entertained a wish to make the experiment. Sweet lemons, limes, oranges, and citrons, offer, in addition to their superb blossoms and delicious perfume, fruit of the finest quality ; and grapes, which are trained in luxuriant arcades, not only give beauty to a somewhat formal plantation, but afford a grateful banquet, at a period of the year (the hot winds), in which they are most acceptable.

Amongst the indigenous fruits of these jungles is a wild plum, which has found an entrance into the gardens, and which, if properly cultivated, would produce excellent fruit ; in its present state, unfortunately, it is too resinous to be relished by unaccustomed palates. The melons, which grow to a large size, and are abundant in the season, are chiefly procured from native gardens, on the banks of the Jumna, as they flourish on the sands which border that river. Mangos and jacks occupy extensive plantations, exclusive of the gardens, and are left, as well as custard apples, plantains, and guavas, to the cultivation of the natives, the ground in the neighbourhood of a bungalow being chiefly appropriated to foreign productions.

The seeds of European vegetables are sown after the rainy season, and come to perfection during the cold weather : green peas, cauliflowers, and cos lettuce,

appear at Christmas, sustaining, without injury, night-frosts which would kill them in their native climes. Either the cultivation is better understood, or the soil is more congenial to these delicate strangers, since they succeed better than the more hardy plants,—celery, beet-root, and carrots, which never attain to their proper size, and are frequently deficient in flavour. To watch the progress of the winter-crop of familiar vegetables, and to inspect those less accurately known, cannot fail to be interesting, although the climate will not permit a more active part in the management of a garden.

The oleanders, common all over India, are the pride of the jungles, spreading into large shrubs, and giving out their delicate perfume from clusters of pink and white flowers. The *baubool* also boasts scent of the most exquisite nature, which it breathes from bells of gold; the delicacy of its aroma renders it highly prized by Europeans, who are overpowered by the strong perfume of the jessamine and other flowers much in request with the natives. The sensitive plant grows in great abundance in the gardens of Etawah, spreading itself over whole borders, and shewing on a grand scale the peculiar quality whence it derives its name: the touch of a single leaf will occasion those of a whole parterre to close and shrink away, nor will it recover its vigour until several hours after the trial of its sensibility. Equally curious, and less known, is the property of another beautiful inhabitant of these regions; the flowers of a tree of no mean growth arrive to nearly the size of a peony; these flowers blow in the morning, and appear of the purest white,

gradually changing to every shade of red, until, as the evening advances, they become of a deep crimson, and falling off at night, are renewed in their bridal attire the following day. When gathered and placed in a vase, they exhibit the same metamorphosis, and it is the amusement of many hours to watch the progress of the first faint tinge, as it deepens into darker and darker hues.

Around every shrub, butterflies of various tints sport and flutter, each species choosing some particular blossoms, appearing as if the flowers themselves had taken flight, and were hovering over the parent bough: one plant will be surmounted by a galaxy of blue-winged visitants, while the next is radiant with amber or scarlet. Immense winged grasshoppers, whose whole bodies are studded with emeralds which no jeweller can match; shining beetles, bedecked with amethysts and topazes; and others, which look like spots of crimson velvet, join the gay carnival. These lovely creatures disappear with the last sun-beams, and are succeeded by a less desirable race. Huge vampire-bats, measuring four feet from tip to tip of their leathern wings, wheel round in murky circles; owls venture abroad, and the odious musk-rat issues from its hole.

The remaining twilight is usually spent upon the *chubootur*, a raised terrace or platform of chunam, generally commanding an extensive prospect. Chairs are placed for the accommodation of the females and their visitors, and the road beneath often presents a very lively scene. Native conveyances of all kinds, and some exceedingly grotesque, pass to and fro;

fukeers are conveyed from the city to their residences in the neighbouring villages, in a sort of cage, not larger than a modern hat-box, in which the wonder is how they can contrive to bestow themselves; these miniature litters are slung on a bamboo, and carried by two men; covered carts drawn by bullocks, camels, and buffaloes returning home, with occasionally an elephant stalking majestically along, are the most common passengers; but native travellers of rank, attended by numerous trains of well-armed dependants, wedding and religious processions, composed of fantastic groups, frequently attract the gazing eye, amusing by their novelty.

As night draws on, packs of jackalls may be dimly descried on the roads, looking like dark phantoms; and even while the bungalow is blazing with lights, the wolf may be seen prowling at a little distance, watching for some unguarded moment to snatch an infant from its mother's lap. Such catastrophes are not uncommon: frequently, while seated at tea, the party has been startled by the shouts of the servants, too late aware of the intruder's presence. Pursued by cries and the clattering of bamboos, the wretch is sometimes known to drop its prey; but in general he succeeds in carrying it off to some inaccessible spot. These occurrences take place just before nightfall, when the appearance of a wolf is not suspected, and if he should be seen he may be mistaken for a pariah dog. When the natives retire to their houses, every aperture is secured by strong lattices, and none venture to sleep outside who are not capable of protecting themselves. Europeans do not seem to consider wolves

as worthy game ; when a tiger makes his appearance in the neighbourhood of a cantonment, all the residents, civil and military, are astir, and it seldom happens that he is suffered to escape the crusade which is formed against him ; the more ignoble animal is left to the natives, who, however, seldom claim the reward given by government of five rupees per head, in consequence of a superstition which prevails amongst them, that wherever a wolf's blood is spilled, the ground becomes barren : this notion is unfortunate, since they display both courage and conduct in the attack of fiercer beasts of prey. No sooner were the yells of two hyenas heard in the cantonments of Etawah, than a party of half-naked men, armed only with bamboos, went up to the lair which they had chosen, and after a severe struggle secured them alive. The victors bound their prizes to bamboos, and carried them round to each bungalow, where, of course, they received a reward in addition to that given by the judge.

The hyena of a menagerie affords a very faint idea of the savage of the jungles ; these creatures, though severely injured, retained, even in their manacled state, all their native ferocity, unsubdued by long fasting and blows. A gentleman present, anxious to exhibit his skill with the broad-sword, brandished a *tulwur*, with the intention of cutting off their heads ; but he was disappointed : one of the expected victims snatched the weapon from his hand, and broke it in pieces in an instant ; they were then less ostentatiously despatched.

It is unfortunate that beauty of prospect cannot be

combined in India with the more essential conveniences necessary for the performance of military duties ; while nothing can be more ugly than the tract marked out for the cantonments of Etawah, the ravines into which it is broken, at a short distance, leading to the Jumna, are exceedingly picturesque, affording many striking landscapes ; the sandy winding steeps on either side are richly wooded with the *neem*, the *peepul*, and a species of the palm, a tree which in the Upper Provinces always stands singly, the soil being less congenial than lower grounds near the coast : in these situations it is more beautiful than when it plants itself in whole groves. Sometimes an opening presents a wide view over wild jungle ; at others, it gives glimpses of the Jumna, whose blue waters sparkle in the beams of the rising or setting sun. These ravines can only be traversed upon horseback, or upon an elephant, and they must be visited by day-break to be seen to advantage.

However beautiful the awakening of nature may be in other parts of the world, its balmy delights can never be so highly appreciated as in the climes of the East, where its contrast to the subduing heat of burning noon, renders it a blessing of inestimable value. The freshness of the morning air, the play of light and shade, which is so agreeable to the eye, the brightness of the foliage, the vivid hue of the flowers opening their variegated clusters to the sun, rife with transient beauty, for evening finds them drooping ; the joyous matins of the birds, and the playful gambols of wild animals emerging from their dewy lairs, exhilarate the spirits, and afford the highest gratification to the lover

of sylvan scenes. Every tree is tenanted by numerous birds ; superb falcons look out from their lofty eyries, and wild peacocks fling their magnificent trains over the lower boughs, ten or twelve being frequently perched upon the same tree. The smaller birds, sparrow-hawks, green pigeons, blue jays, &c., actually crowd the branches ; the crow-pheasant whirrs as strange footsteps approach, and wings his way to deeper solitudes ; while flocks of parroquets, upon the slightest disturbance, issue screaming from their woody coverts, and, spreading their emerald plumes, soar up until they melt into the golden sky above. At the early dawn, the panther and the hyena may be seen, sculking along to their dens ; the antelope springs up, bounding across the path ; the nylghau scours over bush and briar, seeking the distant plain ; the porcupine retreats grunting, or stands at bay erecting his quills in wrath at the intrusion ; and innumerable smaller animals—the beautiful little blue fox, the civet with its superb brush, and the nimble mongoose—make every nook and corner swarm with life. Gigantic herons stalk along the river's shores ; the brahmanee ducks hover gabbling above, and huge alligators bask on the sand-banks, stretched in profound repose, or watching for their prey.

As the jungles recede from the dwellings of man, they become wilder and more savage ; large *jheels* (ponds) spread their watery wastes over the low marshes, and are the haunt of millions of living creatures. Small hunting parties frequently encamp during the cold season on the banks of these glassy pools, where, in addition to every description of smaller

game, the wild boar, though not so common as in Bengal, may be ridden down and speared by the expert sportsman. The native hunters (*shikarrees*) go out at all periods of the year, and are frequently retained in European establishments for the purpose of ensuring regular supplies for the table.

The equipments of these men would astonish the hero of a hundred *battus* ; they are armed with an old rusty clumsy matchlock, which they never fire except when certain of their quarry, making up in skill and patience for the inefficiency of their weapons. They go out alone, and never return empty-handed ; and young men desirous of obtaining good sport, and of securing the shy and rare beasts of chase, prefer seeking their game attended by one of these men to joining larger parties, who are frequently disappointed of the nobler species, and are compelled to be contented with snippets.

The nylghau, when stall-fed, is more esteemed in India than it deserves, as the flesh resembles coarse beef, and when made into hams is apt to crumble ; smaller venison, on the contrary, is not prized according to its merits, Europeans preferring the half-domesticated tenant of an English park to the wild flavour of the dweller in the jungles.

There is the same prejudice against pea-chicks, which few are aware are considered a dainty at home (the grand criterion of Anglo-Indians), and they are neglected, though affording an excellent substitute for turkeys, which are dear and over-fed. This American importation does not thrive very well in India ; so many die before they arrive at maturity, that the

native breeders are obliged to put a high price upon the survivors, which are often sold for fifteen rupees each : they are generally encumbered with fat, and are, in fact, vastly inferior to young pea-fowl, which combine the flavour of the pheasant with the juiciness of the turkey. Guinea-fowl find a more congenial climate in India, and in many places run wild, and breed in the woods. Common poultry also are found there in an untamed state ; they go under the denomination of jungle-fowl, and are quite equal to any feathered game which is brought to table.

The river Jumna is well-stocked with fish, and during the rainy season numerous nullahs supply Etawah with many excellent sorts, including the finest, though not the largest prawns to be had in India. The mutton and beef are of the best quality, the former being usually an appendage to each resident's farm. Native butchers feed cattle and sheep for European consumption, taking care, however, not to kill the former until all the joints shall be bespoke. A family who entertain, will not find a whole bullock too much for their own use, slaughtered at Christmas ; and the salting pieces reserved for the hot weather, when cured by experienced hands, will keep good for a whole year. The expedient in less favourable seasons to procure salt-beef, when fresh killed, is to boil it in strong brine, and serve it up the same day.

There is no regular supply of European articles at Etawah ; the residents are not sufficiently numerous to encourage a native to traffic in beer, wine, brandy, cheese, &c. ; these things, together with tea and coffee, several kind of spices, English pickles, and English

saucers, must be procured from Cawnpore, a distance of ninety-six miles. A crash of glass or crockery cannot be repaired without recourse to the same emporium, excepting now and then, when an ambulatory magazine makes its appearance, or the *dandies* belonging to boats which have ascended the Ganges from Calcutta, hawk about small investments, which they have either stolen, or purchased for almost nothing at an auction. On these occasions, excellent bargains are procured; boxes of eau-de-cologne, containing six bottles, being sold for a rupee, and anchovy-paste, mushroom-ketchup, &c. at less than the retail price in England; the true value of Brandy or Hollands is better known, and these articles are seldom sold much below the current-price at Cawnpore. The female residents of Etawah must depend entirely upon their own stores, for they cannot purchase a single yard of ribbon, and are frequently in great distress for such trifling articles as pins, needles, and thread; shoes, gloves, everything in fact belonging to the wardrobe, must be procured from Cawnpore, the metropolis of the Upper Provinces.

In the cold season, strings of camels laden with the rich productions of Thibet and Persia pass on their way to Benares and Patna; some are freighted with costly merchandize,—shawls, carpets, and gems; others carry less precious articles,—apples, *kistmists* (raisins), dried apricots, pomegranates, grapes, and pistachio-nuts. Upon the necks of these camels, beautiful little Persian kittens are seen seated, the venders finding a ready sale for their live cargo both at European and native houses. These silken haired bushy-tailed cats

make the prettiest and the most useful pets of an Indian establishment; they are capital mousers, and will attack snakes and the larger kind of lizards; a bungalow, tenanted by one of these long-furred specimens of the feline race and a terrier-dog, will soon be cleared of vermin. They are in great esteem all over the country, and will fetch from eight to fifty rupees, the latter price being offered at Calcutta, where they are not so easily procured as in the upper country. The common cat of Hindostan is exceedingly ugly when unmixed with foreign breeds; but there is a very pretty and curious variety in the Indian islands, with a sleek coat and a short flat tail, square at the end. The Persian merchants also bring very beautiful greyhounds to India for sale, but they are always extremely high-priced, being much in request; the native, or pariah dogs, are a degenerate and useless race of mongrels, and infinite care is taken to preserve foreign breeds, which require great attention, the climate being very unfavourable to all except the hardiest sort of terriers.

The unsheltered site of Etawah affords ample opportunity for the contemplation of the changes of the atmosphere; in no part of India do the hot winds blow with greater fury. This terrible visitation takes place in March, and continues during the whole of April and May. The wind usually rises about eight o'clock in the morning, and if coming from the right point (the west), and strong enough to cause sufficient evaporation, the *tatties* are put up—thick mats, made of the roots of a fragrant grass (*cuscus*), upon bamboo-frames, fitting into the doors or windows; all the

apertures in a contrary direction being closely shut. These *tatties* are kept constantly wet, by men employed to throw water upon them on the outside, and the wind which comes through them is changed into a rush of cold air, so cold, sometimes, as to oblige the party within to put on additional clothing. While the wind continues steady, the only inconveniences to be borne are the darkness—that second plague of Egypt, common to Indian houses—and the confinement; for those who venture abroad pay dearly for their temerity: the atmosphere of a gasometer in full operation might as easily be endured; exhaustion speedily follows, the breath and limbs fail, and, if long exposed to the scorching air, the skin will peel off. Yet this is the period chosen by the natives for their journies and revelries; they cover their faces with a cloth, and with this simple precaution brave the fiercest blasts of the simoom. These winds usually subside at sunset, though they sometimes blow to a later hour, and are known to continue all night. If they should change to the eastward, the *tatties* are useless, producing only a hot damp steam. In this event, the only means of mitigating the heat is to exclude the wind by filling up the crevices, hanging thick curtains (*purdahs*) over the doors, and setting all the *punkahs* in motion: inefficient expedients, for, in despite of all, the atmosphere is scarcely bearable; excessive and continual thirst, languor of the most painful nature, and irritability produced by the prickly heat, render existence almost insupportable. Every article of furniture is burning to the touch; the hardest wood, if not well covered with blankets, will split with a report like that of a

pistol, and linen taken from the drawers appears as if just removed from a kitchen fire. The nights are terrible ; every apartment being heated to excess, each may be compared to a large oven, in which M. Chaubert alone could repose at ease. Gentlemen usually have their beds placed in the verandahs, or on the *chubootur*, as they incur little risk in sleeping in the open air, at a season in which no dews fall, and there is scarcely any variation in the thermometer. Tornadoes are frequent during the hot winds : while they last, the skies, though cloudless, are darkened with dust, the sun is obscured, and a London fog cannot more effectually exclude the prospect. The birds are dreadful sufferers at this season ; their wings droop, and their bills are open as if gasping for breath ; all animals are more or less affected, and especially those which have been imported to the country. Our Persian cats were wont to coil themselves round the jars of water in the bathing-rooms, and to lie on the wet grass between the tatties, where they frequently received a sprinkling from the copious libations poured upon the frames without. If, tired of confinement, they ventured into the verandah, they would speedily return, looking quite aghast at the warm reception they had met with abroad.

The breaking up of the hot winds affords a magnificent spectacle ; they depart in wrath, after a tremendous conflict with opposing elements. The approaching strife is made known by a cloud, or rather a wall of dust, which appears at the extremity of the horizon, becoming more lofty as it advances. The air is sultry and still, for the wind, which is tearing up the sand

as it rushes along, is not felt in front of the billowy masses, whose mighty ramparts gather strength as they spread ; at length the plain is surrounded, and the sky becomes as murk as midnight. Then the enchained thunder breaks forth ; but its most awful peals are scarcely heard in the deep roar of the tempest ; burst succeeds to burst, each more wild and furious than the former ; the forked lightnings flash in vain, for the dust, which is as thick as snow, flings an impenetrable veil around them. The wind, having spent itself in a final effort, suddenly subsides, and the dust is as speedily dispersed by torrents of rain, which in a very short time flood the whole country. The *tatties* are immediately thrown down, and, though they may have previously rendered shawls necessary, the relief experienced when breathing the fresh air of heaven, instead of that produced by artificial means, is indescribable. All the animal creation appear to be endued with fresh life and vigour, as they inhale the cooling breezes ; the songs of the birds are heard again, and flocks and herds come forth rejoicing. Before the watery pools have penetrated into the parched earth, so rapid is the growth of vegetation, patches of green appear along the plain, and those who take up their posts in the verandah for an hour or two, may literally see the grass grow. In the course of a single day, the sandy hillocks will be covered with verdure, and in a very short time the grass becomes high and rank. While the clouds are actually pouring out their liquid treasures, the rainy season is not unpleasant ; *punkahs* may be dispensed with, and the venetians may be removed without

danger of being blinded by the glare; but the intervals between the showers are excessively hot, and the frequent changes of the atmosphere, and the malaria arising from the surrounding marshes, render it dreadfully unhealthy. Fever and ague are the common complaints; the former is often fatal, and the utmost vigilance is requisite to avoid the danger to which both natives and Europeans are continually exposed, since infection is frequently brought from distant places by currents of air.

The effects of these partial tornadoes are very curious; they are almost seen to traverse the plain, their course resembling that of a swollen river or a lava-flood. Persons may occupy a position at a very short distance from the spot in which the tempest is raging, without feeling the agitation of the elements, and behold at ease the devastation which they cause; trees are torn up by the roots, roofs are stripped of their tiles, and the choppers of out-houses fly off like gigantic birds, being carried several yards beyond the place where they originally stood. I once witnessed a very amusing scene of this nature: the servants of a neighbour, anxious to preserve their master's property, on the roof of the cook-room taking wing, rushed out of their houses, and, with great vigour and alacrity, seized the ends of the flying bamboos ere they reached the ground, running along with their canopy until its impetus had ceased, and then restoring it to the deserted walls on which it had formerly rested.

The rains usually continue from the first or second week in June until the middle of October, and in some seasons are extremely violent; the desolation

on the river's banks is frightful ; whole villages are plunged into the flood, a catastrophe seldom attended by loss of life, as the natives usually have timely warning, and escape with their goods and chattels, taking care, however, like the Sicilians in the neighbourhood of *Ætna*, to build again in places equally exposed to inundation. Bungalows often sustain considerable damage during a very wet season ; the pillars of the verandahs sink and lose their perpendicular, and out-offices and servants' houses are frequently washed away, leaving nothing but fragments of mud-walls behind. The thunder and lightning which accompany these cataracts are terrific, filling the heavens with blue and crimson light, and carrying death into the plains, where herdsmen and shepherds frequently perish. The final fall is generally the heaviest, lasting three or four days, and bringing cold weather along with it. A sudden and grateful change of climate takes place upon the departure of the rains ; the sun is deprived of its noxious power and renders the heavens bright without being sultry ; exercise may be taken on foot until ten o'clock in the day, in the Upper Provinces, and in a carriage at all times without inconvenience. While the weather is cloudy (generally during a few days in December), it is exceedingly practicable to walk out in the middle of the day in Etawah, and higher up, at Kurnaul, this gratification may be enjoyed for two months.

The climate all over India, even in Bengal, is delightful from October until March ; all is brightness and beauty outside the house ; summer gardens glow with myriads of flowers, native and exotic, while

within, fires, especially in the evening, are acceptable, and blankets are necessary to ward off the inclemencies of the night. This is the gay season, and even Etawah loses part of its dulness, being visited by regiments on their march to and from other stations, who sometimes make it their halting-place for a couple of days. A canvas city starts up, as if by magic, on the bare plain; bullocks, camels, horses, and elephants, are grouped amid the tents; sheep, cows, goats, and poultry, following the fortunes of their owners, occupy temporary farm-yards in the rear; and bazaars are opened for the sale of all the necessaries of life. At day-break, the striking of tent-pins, the neighing of horses, the lowing of herds, and the grunt of the camels, mixed with the long roll of the drums and bugle-calls, give warning that the march is about to commence; and when the sun has risen, troops of hideous white vultures are seen feeding on the offal, where all the day before had been crowd and bustle.

CHAPTER II.

INDIAN SPORTS.

HAPPY are those young men who take out with them to India the tastes and habits of a scholar or of a sportsman, though perhaps neither can be carried to excess, without danger, in a climate almost equally hostile to mental and to bodily exertion. Moderation, either in study or in field-sports, requires more self-command than is usually practised by the young and enthusiastic ; and the latter pursuit, especially, is so fascinating, as to beguile veterans into rash enterprises, which could only be excusable in the days of boyhood. Formerly almost all the European residents of India were mighty hunters ; but, in the present day, though there are quite enough to keep up their ancient reputation, the slaughter of wild animals is not so general, or so absorbing a passion as it used to be, when the Company's territories were surrounded by the courts of native princes, who were accustomed to take the field against the furred and feathered rangers of the forest, with all the pomp and circumstance of war. Parties of gentlemen from Calcutta are in the habit of spending a part of the cold season amid the wildest jungles of Bengal ; but their *cortège*, though exceedingly numerous, and the havoc they make, though sufficiently great to satisfy any reasonable person, are nothing compared to the displays of former times.

The amusements of Cossim Ally Khan, the nawab of Bengal, in 1761, afford a strong contrast to the habits and pursuits of his degenerate representatives. The fame of his exploits still survives in the memory of the people, and their scenes are pointed out with no small degree of exultation.

In one of his grand hunting-parties, his retinue, including a body-guard of cavalry, consisted of not fewer than twenty thousand persons. The officers of his army and household, and his European guests, were conveyed to the theatre of action on elephants, camels, and horses, or in palanquins. The hunters were armed with spears, bows, arrows, and matchlocks, and they were accompanied by greyhounds, hawks, and cheetahs. The scene of the chase was one of the most beautiful which the splendid landscapes of Bengal can present. Between the Ganges and one of the ranges of hills, which spread themselves along the frontiers of the province, there is a wide tract of country, diversified with rocks, woods, lakes, heaths, and rivulets, and abounding with every sort of game; hither the nawab and his party repaired, and, forming an extensive line, roused up the denizens of the field as they advanced, and letting the hawks fly as the wild-fowl sprang up, and loosening the greyhounds and cheetahs upon the deer; the spear and matchlock-men attacked the wild hogs; while others, mounted upon elephants, marked out the still more ferocious animals, and brought them down with a two-ounce ball. The nawab was one of the most active of the party; sometimes he rode in an open palanquin, carried on the shoulders of eight bearers, with his

shield, sword, gun, bow and quiver, lying beside him; sometimes he mounted on horseback, and at others, where the grass and bushes were high, he got upon an elephant. After the diversion had been carried on for three or four hours, and to the distance of twelve miles, the nawab and his guests repaired to their encampment, where a sumptuous repast was served up for their entertainment.

Hunting-parties, upon so grand a scale, are now rare in India, even amongst native princes; and though the imagination can scarcely fail to be dazzled by an assemblage of twenty thousand men, with their picturesque accompaniments of stud and equipage, scouring through the woods, and across the plains, in search of the noblest species of game, such scenes of barbaric splendour would soon become exceedingly tiresome. The truest enjoyment of field-sports is offered to small parties of Europeans, who blend intellectual tastes with the love of the chase; who, while sojourning in the forest, delight to make themselves acquainted with the manners and habits of its wild tribes, and who, not entirely bent upon butchery, vary their occupations by devoting themselves to botanical or geological pursuits.

The period usually chosen for these excursions is from the beginning of November until the end of February, a season in which the climate of Hindostan is delightfully temperate, the air perfectly serene, and the sky often without a cloud. Some verdant spot, shaded by adjacent groves, and watered by a small lake or rivulet, is selected for the encampment. An Indian jungle offers so great a variety of beauties,

that there is no difficulty in the selection of an appropriate scene. A natural lawn, sloping down to a broad expanse of water, shaded by palm-trees, whose graceful, tufted foliage forms so striking a feature in Oriental scenery, or beneath the canopy of the cathedral-like banian, stretching its long aisles in verdant pomp along the plain, or in the neighbourhood of a mosque, pagoda, or stately tomb, whose numerous recesses and apartments offer excellent accommodation for such followers of the party as are not provided with other shelter. There is no danger of being in want of any of the comforts and conveniences of life, during a sojourn in wildernesses, perchance as yet untrodden by the foot of man, or so long deserted as to leave no traces of human occupation. Wherever a party of this kind establishes itself, it will be followed by native shopkeepers, who make themselves very comfortable in a bivouac beneath the trees, and supply the encampment with every necessary which the servants and cattle may require. European stores are, of course, laid in by the *khansamahs* of the different gentlemen, and unless the sportsmen and their fair companions,—for ladies delight in such expeditions,—determine upon living entirely upon game, sheep and poultry are brought to stock a farm-yard, rendered impervious to the attacks of savage beasts. Every part of the surrounding country swarms with animal life; in the Upper Provinces, insects are not very troublesome during the cold weather, nor are reptiles so much upon the alert; in Bengal, however, the cold is never sufficiently severe to paralyse the mosquitoes, which are said then to sting more sharply, and to

cherish a more insatiate appetite than during the sultry part of the year. The inconveniences arising from too intimate a connexion with lizards, spiders, and even less welcome guests, are more than counterbalanced by the gratification which inquisitive minds derive from the various novelties which present themselves upon every side. The majestic appearance of the trees, many of them covered with large lustrous flowers, or garlanded with creepers, which attain to an enormous size, must delight all who possess a taste for sylvan scenery. In some of the jungles of India, the giant parasites of the soil appear, as they stretch themselves from tree to tree, like immense boa-constrictors, and the blossoms they put forth, at intervals, are so large, and cluster so thickly together, as to suggest the idea of baskets of flowers hanging from a festoon: the underwood is frequently formed of richly-flowering plants; the *corinda*, which is fragrant even to satiety, and scarcely bearable in any confined place, loading the air with perfume; while the *dhag*, with its fine, wide, dark-green leaf, and splendid crimson vase-like flowers, contrasts beautifully with other forest-trees, bearing white blossoms, smaller, but resembling those of the *camellia japonica*.

So magnificent a solitude would in itself afford a very great degree of pleasure and interest to contemplative minds; but both are heightened by the living objects which give animation to the scene. Though wild hogs are most abundant in plantations of sugarcane, which is their favourite food, and which imparts to their flesh the delicious flavour so highly esteemed by epicures, they are also to be found in the wildest

and most uncultivated tracts. The roebuck, musk and hog-deer, conceal themselves amidst the thickest heath and herbage, and the antelopes and large deer rove over the plains. All these animals, however, seek the thickets occasionally, and they are fond of resorting to the tall coarse grass, which attains to the rankest luxuriance in the levels of the jungle, and is the favourite lair of the tiger and the hyæna. Panthers, leopards, bears, and the beautiful tiger-cat, are likewise inhabitants of these hiding-places; and in the neighbourhood of Rajmhal, the Deyra Dhoon, the Terraie, &c., rhinoceroses and wild buffaloes are added to the list. Amid the smaller and more harmless creatures which haunt the jungle, one of the prettiest and most interesting is the fox; its size scarcely exceeds that of an English hare; the limbs are slender, and it is delicately furred with soft hair, generally of a bluish grey. It has not the offensive smell of the reynard of Europe, its food being principally grain, vegetables, and fruit. The passion of the fox for grapes was by no means a flight of fancy on the part of our old friend *Æsop*, who shewed himself well acquainted with the habits of the Asiatic species. They burrow in holes, and prefer the side of a hillock, where the grass is short and smooth, to the wood; and there they may be seen in the morning and after sunset, frisking about and playing with their young. They afford excellent sport when hunted; for, though not strong or persevering, they are fleet and flexible, and make many efforts (by winding in successive evolutions) to escape their pursuers. Jackals are almost as common as crows, in every part of India; but notwithstanding

their numbers, and the great desire which they evince to make themselves heard, there is some difficulty in getting a sight of them, except when the moon is up, and then they seek concealment in the shadows, gliding along under covert, with a stealthy movement, like some dark phantom, or when the prospect of a banquet upon some newly-slain victim lures them from their retreat in open day.

However bare and solitary the place may be, the instant any animal falls to the ground, exhausted by wounds or disease, it is immediately surrounded by troops of two-legged and four-footed cormorants, which do not await its last gasp to commence their attack : four or five hundred vultures will be assembled, in an incredibly short period of time, in places where they are not usually to be found, whenever a bullock or deer has fallen a sacrifice to a tiger. Upon these occasions, if the rightful master of the feast should be in the neighbourhood, and choosing, as often is the case, to delay his meal until sunset, the jackals and the vultures, cowering close to the spot, await with great patience the moment in which they may commence their operations without giving offence, taking care to remove to a respectful distance, when the tiger, who is said to approach the dead carcass in the same cautious and crouching manner as when endeavouring to steal upon living prey, makes his appearance upon the scene.

It is affirmed that, wherever tigers roam or couch, multitudes of birds collect and hover about them, screaming and crying, as if to create an alarm ; and it is also said that peacocks are particularly allured by

the tawny monarch of the wood, and that, when he is perceived by a flock, they will advance towards him immediately, and begin, with their usual ostentatious pomp, to strut around him, their wings fluttering, their feathers quivering, and their tails bristly and expanded.* Native sportsmen, who always prefer stratagem to open war, take advantage of this predilection, and painting a brown cloth screen, about six feet square, with black spots or streaks, advance under its cover, which is placed fronting the sun. The peafowl either approaches the lure, or suffers the fowlers, who are concealed behind it, to draw near enough to their mark to be quite certain of not missing it. A hole in the canvas enables them to take an accurate aim, and the *ruse* is always successful.

Strange instances of the fascination of animals are recorded, by which it would appear, that, under its influence, the most active and timid rush into the danger which we should suppose they would be most anxious to avoid. The power which serpents possess over birds, squirrels, &c. is well known; and those who have visited unfrequented places have had opportunities of witnessing the effect of novel sights upon the shyest denizens of the waste.

When the line of march of large bodies of troops has led across sequestered plains, they have attracted the attention of herds of deer grazing in the neighbourhood. When startled by the humming murmuring noise made by the soldiers in passing, they have stood for some time staring, and apparently aghast with

* Some writers aver that the Indian peacocks never spread their tails.

astonishment, with their eyes fixed upon the progressive files, whose glaring red uniforms and glittering muskets might well inspire them with fear. At length, in his bewilderment, the leading stag, striking the ground, tossing his antlers, and snorting loudly, has rushed forward across the ranks, followed by the whole herd, to the utter dismay and confusion of the soldiers, the frightened deer bounding over the heads of those files who were taken too much by surprise to halt, and make way for them. Incidents of a similar nature have occurred more than once, and they serve to give interest and variety to a march across some of those apparently boundless plains, which stretch to the horizon on every side, and are not of unfrequent occurrence in the thinly-peopled districts of Hindostan.

The birds, in many places, are to be seen literally in myriads; water-fowl especially congregate in the greatest abundance and variety; their numbers almost covering the lakes and *jheels*, when resting upon the water; and forming thick clouds, when, upon any alarm, they rise simultaneously upon the wing. The margin of the stream is surrounded by storks and cranes. The species of both are numerous, and the gracefulness of the shape of many can only be exceeded by the beauty of their plumage. The crested heron, whose snow-white tuft is an emblem of sovereignty in India, and the only feather which the religious prejudices of the Rajpoot princes permit them to wear, is one of the loveliest creatures imaginable; its eyes are of bright scarlet, and amidst many competitors in beauty, it shines conspicuous.

There are no pheasants in the woods of Bengal or Behar ; but they are found upon the confines of Assam, Chittagong, and the ranges of the Himalaya. In Nepaul, and particularly about the Morung, they are large and beautiful, more especially the golden, the burnished, the spotted, and the azure, together with the brown argus-eyed pheasant. There are several varieties of pea-fowl, black, white, and grey, in addition to the common sort ; and though there are some districts in India, styled *par* distinction, *More-gunje*, "the place of peacocks," they are so common all over the country, that it would be almost difficult to find a woodland haunt where they do not abound. They are certainly not prized in India according to their merits, either as an ornamental appendage, or as an addition to the board. Some Europeans have only been reconciled to their admission at table, by an account which has reached them of their appearance at the Lord Mayor's state-dinners in London : Anglo-Indians, generally speaking, being exceedingly unwilling to judge for themselves where their gastronomic taste can be called in question. Nevertheless, those who, where native productions are worthy of praise, entertain no absurd prejudices in favour of exotics, are glad to have an opportunity of repeating the justly-merited claims to distinction of the pea-chick, as an article of provender.

High as are the merits of this fowl, however, in its happy combination of the game-flavour of the pheasant with the juiciness of the turkey, it must hide its diminished head before the glories of the florikin ; the flanderkin of feudal banquets, and the peacock's early

rival at the baronial feasts of the Montacutes and the Courtenayes. The florikin is nearly, if not quite, as large as a turkey, and the plumage on the back is not unlike that which distinguishes the monarch of our poultry-yard: but the cock is furnished with a much more splendid crest. A tuft of fine black velvet feathers, which usually lies smooth upon the back of the head, can be erected at pleasure, and, when spread out, adds greatly to the noble appearance of the bird. Its favourite harbour is in the natural pastures which edge the extremities of swamps, and the borders of lakes, always in the neighbourhood of marshy ground, but not far distant from the uplands. In consequence of this choice of situation, and the variety of food which it presents, its flesh acquires a peculiarity unknown to other birds; the legs, which are white, resemble in flavour those of a pheasant, while the breast and the wings bear a similarity to the wild-duck: epicures pronounce the whole to be delicate, savoury, and juicy beyond all comparison. This fine bird is not sufficiently common in India to pall upon the appetite; it is found in Bengal and in the neighbourhood of the hill-districts; but, in many parts of the Upper Provinces, it will be searched for in vain.

The woodcock is not an inhabitant of southern Asia, but snipes are exceedingly abundant; and there is one variety, the painted snipe, which attains a very large size, and which compensates for the absence of the former-mentioned bird.

The jungle-fowl performs the same duty for the pheasants, where they are not to be found; and in

some places the speckled poultry of Guinea, which have wandered into the woods, and bred there, are discovered in a wild state. It is one of the most agreeable, amid the numerous enjoyments of forest scenery, to see the hens and chickens sculking and scudding between the bushes, and to hear the crowing of the jungle cock. The black and the rock partridge form very acceptable adjuncts to the table, whilst every variety of pigeons may be had for the trouble of killing them.

A camp-dinner for a hunting party is not only an exhilarating, but a very interesting meal. The most elaborate *pic-nic* provided for a *fête-champêtre* in England, where people are put to all sorts of inconveniences, and must content themselves with a cold collation, is nothing to the luxurious displays of cookery performed in the open air in India. Under the shelter of some brushwood, the spits turn merrily and rapidly over charcoal fires; an oven is constructed for the baking-department, and all the beneficial effect of hot hearths, for stews and other savoury compounds, are produced with the greatest ease and facility. All that can be attainable within the range of fifty or sixty miles, is brought into the camp upon the heads of *coolies*, glad to earn a few *pice* for their daily bread, and indifferent to the obstructions which may beset their path. The multitude of followers, attendant even upon a small encampment, precludes the possibility of any dreary or desolate feeling; the habits of the people are in unison with the scene; they are quite as happy under the umbrageous and odoriferous canopy of a *tope*, as they would be in the marble

chambers of a palace. A gipsey-life appears to afford them the truest enjoyment ; and the scattered groups which they afford in the glades and openings of the forest, their blazing fires, cheerful songs, and the majestic and picturesque forms of the elephants and camels glancing between the trees, make up a panorama, which the eye of taste can scarcely tire of contemplating, and which, once seen, can never be forgotten.

Living in a jungle-encampment presents the best opportunity of becoming acquainted with the habits and manners of the elephant, which its domestication can permit. The *mahouts* live in the most intimate association with the huge animals entrusted to their care ; they have each an assistant *coolly*, part of whose business it is to prepare and bake the cakes for the evening meal. A fourth of the number he appropriates to himself, after going through the ceremony of asking the elephant's leave, a piece of etiquette performed in dumb-show, and which the sagacious animal seems perfectly to comprehend. The *coolly* feeds his companion, standing under the trunk, and putting each morsel into his mouth ; an act of supererogation, but one in which native courtesy, or as it may be called officious zeal, delights, men as well as elephants being obliged to submit to more attendance than they require. The *khidmutgars* who wait at table, will stir the tea for their masters, and would cut the meat upon their plates, if permitted to shew their diligence by such minute attentions.

Though the gift of speech is denied to the elephant, he not only appears to understand all that is said to

him by those with whom he is intimately acquainted, but also to possess the power of making his own sentiments and opinions known. He can be incited to extraordinary attempts by praises and by promises ; and when sweetmeats, of which he is inordinately fond, are held out to him, as the reward of successful exertion, he cannot be disappointed of the expected treat without danger.

The *mahouts* converse with their charges as if they were rational beings ; perhaps the difference in intellectual acquirements is not very great between them, and where a strong friendship has been contracted, the elephant will refuse to admit of a successor in the office. Upon the dismissal of his keeper, an elephant, which had always been exceedingly gentle and tractable, suddenly changed its character and became unmanageable. Vain were all the efforts made to soothe and reconcile it to its new associates. After the struggle of several weeks, the attempt was given up ; and the discharged servant being again re-established in his office, the elephant re-assumed its former demeanour, and returned quietly to its duty.

Elephants, though sometimes tempted to fly the abodes of man, and roam in freedom through the wilderness, never forget those persons to whom they have been attached during their state of servitude. One, which had rejoined a wild herd, when encountered by a hunting party, which was accompanied by the *mahout* who had formerly had the charge of him, suffered the man to mount upon his neck, and, notwithstanding the experience he had gained of the sweets of liberty, returned at once to all his old habits.

They are subject, however, at least a few, whose tempers are not particularly good, to fits of caprice and ferocity. It is astonishing with what ease and dexterity they can hook in, with that unwieldy-looking limb, the hind-leg, any object with which it comes in contact. Upon some slight provocation an elephant has been known to ensnare the unfortunate *cooly* in attendance in this manner, and it is an expedient which is resorted to with infinite effect upon the attack of a tiger in the rear: the beast is speedily kicked to death, when once he is drawn within the range of those enormous feet.

The courage of the elephant is also liable to ebbs and flows; sometimes, at the sight of danger, especially on the sudden appearance of a tiger, he will take to flight, rushing wildly through the woods, and endangering the safety of the hunters on his back, by the violent collision of the howdah against the branches of the trees; at other times, he will run into the contrary extreme, and charge upon the tawny brute, by falling on his knees, and endeavouring to pin the tiger down with his tusks. This operation, which renders the howdah a very untenable position, is often followed by another of a still more hazardous nature; the elephant is apt to roll over upon its side, in order to crush the foe by its weight, and in this event the sportsman has a good chance of being thrown into the clutches of the tiger, while all the guns go overboard, as a matter of course. The courage of an elephant should be of a passive nature; and those whose good qualities have been improved by training, stand firm as a rock, sustaining the first burst of

a tiger, uproused from his repose, with imperturbable coolness.

When an elephant has exhibited repeated proofs of cowardice, its dastardly conduct is punished by the degradation of being reduced from the honour of conveying the castle on its back to the burthen of the baggage. It is not insensible to this disgrace, nor will a caparisoned elephant deign to associate with its brethren of the pad. No animal is better acquainted with its claims to distinction, or prouder of the splendour of its array; and the difference of the bearing between those decked in flowing jhools, richly bordered with gold, and bearing the silver howdah, or canopied ambarry on their backs, and the humble beast of burthen, whose housings are of the meanest description, and whose load confers neither honour nor dignity, is very striking.

The care which elephants take of their trunks, in an encounter with wild beasts, shows how conscious they are of the value of that important instrument; sometimes they will erect it over their heads like a horn, and at others pack it into the smallest possible compass.

The elephant's partiality for sweetmeats has been already noticed; it is acquired in plantations of sugarcane, and is universal. A curious instance of this attachment to confectionary, and the method pursued to gratify it by an elephant in its savage state, is upon record. It chanced that a *coolly*, laden with jaggery, a coarse preparation of sugar, was surprised in a narrow pass, in the kingdom of Candy, by a wild elephant. The poor fellow, intent upon saving his

life, threw down the burthen, which the elephant devoured, and being well pleased with the repast, determined not to allow any person egress or regress who did not provide him with a similar banquet. The pass occurred upon one of the principal thoroughfares to the capital, and the elephant, taking up a formidable position at the entrance, obliged every passenger to pay tribute. It soon became generally known that a donation of jaggery would ensure safe conduct through the guarded portal, and no one presumed to attempt the passage without the expected offering.

The elephant is fond of petting and protecting some inferior animal ; it often takes a fancy to a little dog, and the latter, speedily becoming acquainted with the value of such a friend and ally, indulges himself in all sorts of impertinences. His post, a very secure one, under the shelter of the elephant's body, enables him to attack and annoy any thing that happens to come in his way ; he rushes out to the assault, and when likely to get the worst in the encounter, flies back to his place of refuge, and barks defiance at his adversaries. Sometimes the *sarus*, a tall bird of the crane species, which is often domesticated in an Indian compound, is taken into favour ; but instances of similar friendship, between animals of very different habits and species, are not at all uncommon. A terrier dog, a Persian cat, and an antelope, brought up together in the family of an officer, who was accustomed to divide his caresses amongst them, lived with each other in the greatest harmony and affection. During his residence in Calcutta, he was in the habit of spend-

ing the whole morning abroad, and of returning about sun-set to dress. His four-footed favourites were acquainted with the hour in which they might expect to see him, and the trio always came in a body to meet and give him welcome ; the cat cared nothing about change of place, being perfectly satisfied to accompany her master in all his travels, and feeling quite at home wherever he and the dog were to be found.

A party of Europeans, encamping in a jungle, will speedily discover their powers of attraction by the number of carrion birds drawn to the spot by the scent of the slaughter in their farm yard. The acuteness of the smell of these creatures has already been remarked ; at the most extraordinary distance they seem to be perfectly acquainted with every matter which can interest them, and solitary bungalows, where, on ordinary occasions, the kites and crows are allowed to collect the offal unmolested, will be certain of a visit from vultures, whenever any thing worthy of attention is to be had.

The *argeelah*, or butcher bird, though sometimes inhabiting solitary places, prefers a large cantonment to the jungle ; they are always to be seen where European soldiers are quartered, but scarcely think it worth their while to visit small stations garrisoned by native troops, the few English officers in command not killing enough provisions to satisfy their inordinate appetites. Their nests are, however, almost invariably found in remote and thinly-peopled tracts ; the country retirement, at the breeding season, for the fashionable visitants of the metropolis of Bengal, being the neighbourhood of Commercolly. It is not generally known,

that the marabout feathers, by some supposed to be the tribute of the paddy-goose, are, in fact, furnished by this disgusting looking animal, whose coarse ragged attire gives no promise of the delicate beauty of the plumes so much in esteem in France and England. They grow in a tuft under the tail, and are not visible except upon close inspection. The men who get their bread by the sale of these feathers, conceal the fact as much as possible, under the idea that it would deteriorate their value. As the *argeelah* is protected by law in Calcutta, the people who collect the plumes, visit the place of their retirement for the purpose, and give its name to their merchandize, which is sold under the appellation of Commercolly feathers. The tuft is easily extracted, and it sometimes happens that when an adjutant, as the bird is commonly called, is caught upon some high terrace or roof-top, where the depredation cannot come under the surveillance of the authorities, he is robbed of the valuable appendage ; it is only necessary to catch him by the feathers under the tail ; the first struggle to be free leaves them in the hand of the marauder. Excepting the heron's, there are no other Indian plumes so highly prized, and, as an article of commerce, the marabouts' are the most important.

In enumerating the amusements afforded by a jungle, that supplied by the monkeys must not be omitted. In topes where particular tribes have taken up their quarters, they are innumerable, and upon the least alarm, keep up an incessant discord and chatter amidst the branches. The frolics and gambols of these animals, when viewed at a distance, are highly diverting ; but

it is by no means desirable to come into close contact with a troop, their fierceness being quite equal to their cunning ; they have been known to attack a single huntsman, and so far get the better of him as to deprive him of his gun. Young men can scarcely withstand the temptation of having a pop at them, either to scare them from some act of depredation, or out of mere wantonness, and they are not slow to perceive the cause of their alarm ; after the first consternation, occasioned by the report of a fowling-piece, has subsided, they are apt to resent it upon the person of the offender. They will shake the boughs over his head, grin and chatter through them, and a few of the most daring will beset the path, and, with some hundreds to back them, in the event of an assault, the battle is best avoided, since its issue would be rather doubtful. The extraordinary veneration with which the monkeys are regarded by the Hindoo natives of India, prevents the extirpation, which their exploits amongst the corn and other plantations seem to render necessary, as a measure of precaution. Monkeys, it is said, are bad eating, and there appears to be a sufficient number to supply the bazaars of a district during a scarcity of grain.

There is no part of the world, perhaps, which produces game in greater plenty or diversity than Bengal. Besides fifteen species of deer, including the antelope, the roe-buck, the red-deer, the small moose-deer, the hog or bristled deer, and the musk-deer ; there are wild hogs, hares, several kinds of common partridge ; quails, which at a particular season have been compared to flying pats of butter ; peacocks, ortolans,

and black-partridge; wild-geese, wild-ducks, teal, widgeon, water-hens, cranes, storks, and snipes of sundry shapes, colours, and sizes; the florikin, before-mentioned, though not in such abundance as the others, and the jungle-fowl. A great variety of fish is also supplied from the lakes, jheels, tanks, and nullahs; the latter are caught in large quantities, either with nets or by a still more simple contrivance, that of placing large bundles of rushy bushes in the water over-night. Water-fowl are caught in Hindostan by people, who either wade or swim into the lakes with an earthen pot over their heads, or the artificial representation of a duck, made to fit on like a cap. Thus disguised, they are enabled to get so close to the the objects of their pursuit as to pull them by their feet under water, and to deposit them in their game-bag; the manœuvre is effected by expert persons with very little disturbance to other flocks upon the lake, and so easily, as to allow them to sell the produce of their day's sport at a very low price.

CHAPTER III.

THE JUNGLES.

THE term jungle is very ill understood by European readers, who generally associate it with uninhabited forests and almost impenetrable thickets, whereas all the desert and uncultivated parts of India, whether covered with wood or merely suffered to run waste, are styled jungles ; and *jungle-wallah* is a term indiscriminately applied to a wild cat or to a gentleman who has been quartered for a considerable period in some desolate part of the country. Persons who are attached to very small stations in remote places, or who reside in solitary houses, surrounded only by the habitations of the natives, are said to be living in the jungles.

For a short period, a sojourn amidst the untamed wildernesses of Hindostan is very desirable, and with the exception of the fixed inhabitants of Calcutta, all persons visiting India must have more or less experience of the delights of savage life in their passage through those unreclaimed tracts which continually occur during a long march. But though perhaps as much as may appear to be desirable may be seen in a journey of two or three months, it is necessary to occupy the same spot for a considerable length of time, in order thoroughly to understand the ways and modes of spending the day in the solitary districts of a foreign country ; for, in constant movements

through wilds, however monotonous, the incidents of the march and the change of scene afford a salutary relief to ennui, which is not to be found in a fixed residence. If our fellow-sojourners in the wilds do not happen to be congenial spirits, if the boar of the neighbouring *cate* (plantation) happen to be as agreeable a companion as the *bore* of the adjacent bungalow, the misnamed *society* of the place becomes an additional grievance.

There are perverse persons in the world who refuse to accommodate themselves to the circumstances in which they may be placed, and who, by carrying the formalities and observances of large communities into the jungles, effectually prevent the easy sociability which can alone render constant intercourse desirable. Where the circle is extremely circumscribed, the evil is without remedy; the efforts of one individual, or even of one family, must be unavailing, and the minority are condemned to lead the most irksome life imaginable, thrown entirely upon their own resources, and those resources miserably contracted by the peculiarities of the climate, and the difficulty of procuring the materials necessary to carry on any little ingenious art by which they may hope to beguile the time. To descend to particulars, we may imagine a small station (there are many such in India, though it would be invidious to name them,) in which the number of Europeans does not amount to more than a dozen individuals; this station, at least a hundred miles from the head-quarters of the district, and the inhabitants depending entirely upon each other for society, with the exception of any chance traveller who may happen

to pass through. Where the persons thus congregated together are of cheerful, obliging dispositions, ready to fall into any rational plan for the benefit and advantage of the whole, a residence in the jungles of India may be rendered exceedingly delightful; and those who have enjoyed its freedom from worldly cares and worldly vanities, its quiet sober existence, will look back upon it as the most enviable portion of their lives. Conversation will supply the place of books, and the few books which the station may boast will furnish topics for conversation, if those who are fond of reading can be induced to enter into discussions upon what they read. When this is the case, the value of a book is enhanced to a degree scarcely conceivable to those who can command a well-furnished library at home: the commentaries elicited may not be very profound, but, if lively and entertaining, they form admirable substitutes for the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly*, and where anything like talent is brought into play, the absence of many of those prejudices, which can scarcely fail to bias opinions concerning new works in the places of their production, renders decisions formed in the jungles of India more just and impartial than those which are so peremptorily pronounced by the leading reviews of the day.

The bachelors of a station usually bestow all their tediousness upon each other, and unless one should be more studious than the rest, whether their tempers and habits should assimilate or not, will be constantly together, frequently taking no sort of pleasure in that daily intercourse which they cannot live without. With the ladies it is different; they will not be at the

trouble of leaving their houses except upon formal invitations, unless inclination should lead them into society ; in this event neither rains nor hot winds can prevent them from traversing the short distances which divide the bungalows from each ; and when kindness of heart or mutual tastes bring them into constant association, the gentlemen follow in their train, very few preferring the jovialities of their own exclusive circle to the attractiveness of a feminine coterie. The fruits of domestication amid the ladies, where the harmony is not interrupted by any mal-accident, are of incalculable value ; so much, indeed, depends upon the wives and sisters of the residents, that there ought to be an Act of Parliament to prohibit the exportation of any lady, who is not qualified to lighten the dreariness of an Indian jungle.

It has been before remarked, that there is little scope for feminine industry in our eastern possessions. Charity bazaars, which put so many fair fingers into motion in Europe, are almost unknown out of Calcutta. Where there is no theatre, no fancy ball in perspective, requiring dresses and decorations to be fashioned out of such materials as only a bold and imaginative spirit would consider applicable, invention flags ; people like to fancy that they are manufacturing something useful, and though nothing in India is unprofitable which affords employment for the fingers, preventing the miserable tedium resulting from utter inactivity of body and mind, encouragement is necessary to induce perseverance ; and it must be confessed that the gathering together of ladies, in the days of tapestry-hangings or of eleven-sided pincushions, has always

tended to the production of a thousand stitches where one would suffice. The climate in India is unfortunately adverse to needle-work, or any work whose beauty may be endangered by hands which cannot be kept at a proper temperature: thread-netting (taking the precaution to use silver implements) is the employment best adapted to the hot weather, but the fair proportions of many a scarf have been curtailed by the want of a few reels of cotton. The natives twist all the thread they use as they need it from the raw material, division of labour being very ill-understood in Hindostan,—in consequence perhaps of the dearth of political economists,—and Calcutta does not always afford a supply of the precise article wanted to complete some delicate manufacture, which will not admit of any inferior substitute. European shopkeepers vary their prices so considerably, according to the demand, that prudent persons will not indulge in the purchase of goods charged so much beyond their value. The ladies at a jungle station were disappointed of a supply of glazed cotton, in consequence of the enormous price put upon the stock which only one milliner in Calcutta happened to have on hand; six rupees (twelve shillings) per ounce was asked for what in England sold for half the number of pence; and the gentleman employed to execute the commission, struck with the magnitude of the sum, requested fresh instructions from his fair correspondents, who laid their work aside in despair. Thus, it appears that there are many temptations to idleness and few incitements to industry; and in nine cases out of ten, where the ladies of a station only meet upon ceremonious occasions, all the work, both

useful and ornamental, will devolve upon the native tailor employed in the household.

It is difficult to say how the females of Anglo-Indian families, who are only visible upon great occasions, pass away their time. At large stations, it may be supposed that they are really not at home when such an announcement is made to the visitor ; but in the jungles, where every movement must be known at the neighbouring bungalows, there is something mysterious in the seclusion of the lady of the house, and it is to be feared that she does not think her neighbours worth the trouble of making herself visible : her dressing room forms an *impenetrabilia* which is only to be guessed at : if country-born, or transplanted at a very early age, she perhaps finds more amusement in conversation with her native attendants, than in that of Europeans of a higher grade of intellect. There are generally a few ladies at every European station addicted to this mode of thinking and acting ; but in a large society their habits are of little consequence ; it is only when a malign star condemns the members of some family, whose mental acquirements are of a superior order, to drag out two or three years of their existence in a jungle, where there can be no reciprocity of sentiment between them and the inhabitants of the neighbouring houses, that the indulgence of idle and debasing habits can be felt as a grievance. But this is a conjunction which too frequently occurs, and, though quarrelling and ill-will may be avoided, the intercourse which takes place is constrained and heartless.

The observation of the same hours is absolutely essential to the comfort and sociability of a small

station, and where the majority of the inhabitants persist in dining at night, as it is called, it is impossible to establish a free and friendly intercourse. In the first place, this custom involves the necessity of entertaining dinner company, or not receiving any company at all. You cannot dismiss your guests before dinner, and there is no time to see them afterwards. In these days of reduction and retrenchment, there are not many of the servants of the Company who can afford to give frequent invitations to dinner, particularly in the Upper Provinces, where the European supplies for the table are so expensive, that beer and wine are luxuries which prudent subaltern officers deny themselves. Where people of limited incomes do not choose to meet at tea and spend the evening cheerfully together, invitations must necessarily be restricted, and can only occur at long intervals. These station-dinners, as they are called, which in large cantonments are only given by persons who can afford them, and in extensive societies bring people agreeably together, are the dullest things imaginable when composed of some eight or ten individuals, who have nothing on earth to say to each other when they meet.

The family of the commandant of a small station, who were willing to promote sociability in any form that would be most acceptable to the circle around them, having failed in an attempt to introduce early dinners and evening parties, were content sometimes to put off their own repast for the convenience of their guests, and to see company occasionally after the most approved fashion. The sacrifice of domestic comfort upon these occasions was very great indeed ;

the disarrangement of household economy formed but a small part of it, as it was merely necessary to substitute an early tiffin for the four o'clock dinner ; but in incurring a certain expense, there was no commensurate gain in the solace of a dull and tedious day, to be got through, as usual, without exterior assistance. There is nothing so fatiguing as *ennui* ; at nightfall, it would have been much more agreeable to prepare for bed than to sit upon the *chubootur*, or terrace, in expectation of guests, from whose conversational powers little pleasure could be anticipated ; and frequent repetition had diminished the amusement at first derived from the great absurdity of making a formal and state affair of a meeting between persons located in the same wilderness, and whose happiness might have been so much increased by a more rational method of spending their time. At the hour prescribed by a goddess destined to reign supreme amidst the untamed savages, the wolves and hyænas of an Indian plain, these votaries of fashion began to arrive ; carriage after carriage drove up to the door, until the whole council of ten were fairly set down from their respective vehicles ; the ladies dressed in ball attire, and the gentlemen uncomfortable in the prospect of being obliged to sit with their feet *under* instead of *on* the table, without their due allowance of cigars. To inordinate self-indulgence at home might be traced the difficulties of getting the station together in a sociable and friendly way ; the decencies of life had become irksome to persons who were in the habit of lounging about their houses in *deshabille* ; and this slatternly luxury could only be relinquished for some-

thing in the style of those great entertainments, which seemed to them to be alone worthy of any sacrifice of personal comfort. The dinner of course was dull, the conversation confined to those common-place topics which may be made agreeable in a family party, but which offer lenten entertainment to a formal circle. After a few hours, wasted in vain attempts to amuse people who belong to the most difficult class in the world, a sort of universal joy takes place at the separation; the guests are glad to go, the hosts are glad to see them depart, they have been defrauded of a comfortable sleep; they rejoice that a disagreeable duty has been performed, and that a considerable period will elapse before they shall think themselves called upon to perform it again.

The peaceably inclined console themselves with the idea that it is far better to vegetate in this way than to live in a state of warfare; but there is generally at least one person in the community who thinks otherwise, and who, for the sake of a little variety, contrives to pick a quarrel with his neighbours—no difficult matter, where there is a disinclination to conform to the wishes of others. Indeed, it requires no inconsiderable portion of good sense and good temper, to avoid giving offence to persons who expect a great deal, and concede nothing; although they may refuse to lend themselves to any scheme proposed by the more active and social spirits, they are highly indignant when they are left out of such amusements as the place may afford. Should any strangers pass through, though they would never think of inviting them to their own houses, they take it much amiss

if they should not be asked to meet them at the more hospitable mansions ; they have no idea of being made conveniences of—sent for when there is nobody else ; and to be asked in the evening, when there is a dinner party, is an indignity to which they will not submit. In fact, such is the high tone of society in India, that no consideration of small rooms and limited space would excuse those who, in the attempt to bring a large party together, should ask a certain portion to join it after dinner ; it is a thing not to be thought of.

Twenty persons formed the utmost number which could be accommodated at table in the bungalow before-mentioned, as the grand theatre of the station-dinners at a remote jungle. A regiment passing through, the family were anxious to invite all the strangers as well as the individuals composing their own circle, but it could not be accomplished ; not a soul would condescend to come to tea ; it was therefore necessary to make a selection : the married people were asked, and the young men were left to their tents. There was no use in giving them the option of coming in the evening, they would have been offended by so great a mark of disrespect as the supposition that they could be induced to act in a manner so derogatory to their dignity.

This spirit pervades every part of India ; in Calcutta, the seats at a dinner party, vacated by any unforeseen contingency, cannot be filled up ; intimate acquaintance, who would readily come in a friendly way at a day's notice, will not submit to stop a gap after invitations to others have been sent out ; where the

party, not intended to be a large one, has been diminished by disappointments, the evil becomes very serious ; upon such occasions, illnesses or deaths assume the character of affronts, for the guests who fulfil their engagements are, in nine cases out of ten, annoyed at having so few persons to meet them, and receive the apologies of the master and mistress of the house with ill-concealed resentment. The Medes and the Persians appear to have given the laws to Anglo-Indians ; no innovation can be tolerated, and young men, who in England would feel honoured by being invited to attend the ladies in the drawing-room, must in India be treated with all the respect and consideration due to age and rank ; they are offended by any distinction, and the ensign, if invited at all, must be invited with the same form and ceremony observed towards his colonel.

At the period of the relief, even the jungles participate in the amusements which the cold season produces all over India ; they are seldom or never entirely out of the line of march, and the influx of strangers, although only for a couple of days, affords an agreeable variety to those who are happy to avail themselves of the change. Chance travellers pass through occasionally, even at the most hostile period of the year ; but in the cold weather, pleasing expectations may be entertained of the arrival of guests, bringing with them the news and fashions of more frequented places. The appearance of a tent is always signified by the servants of a family known to delight in the performance of the duties of hospitality. If double-poled, the inhabitant must be a person of

some rank ; his name and quality are speedily discovered ; and, in nineteen cases out of twenty, this revelation brings with it a tolerably accurate knowledge of the disposition and character.

People in India are well known by report throughout the whole of the presidency to which they may be attached, and there are few whose acquaintance is so little desirable as to exclude them from the houses of social individuals condemned to solitude during a considerable period of the year. Where persons of congenial dispositions meet in this manner, the accidental collision leads to valuable friendships. A well-informed, well-educated civilian, travelling with two or three chests of books, by way of beguiling time, in a lonely journey, proved to be a prize of the first magnitude ; the day was spent in lively discussion ; an interchange of volumes took place, and as the residence of the owner of an extensive library was *only* at the distance of three days' march, a prospect was opened of the most cheering kind, since the assistance of a *coolie* could at any time procure a fresh supply of standard works from the well-filled shelves of this accommodating *neighbour*. The inhabitants of the station had been accustomed to send to a miserable circulating library, about a hundred miles off, for the "last new work by the author of *Waverley*," and were often fain to be content with the refuse of the Minerva press : happy were they, when the unconscious messenger deposited at their feet the lucubrations of some popular writer !

The exquisite delight of reading a book really worth reading in an Indian jungle is almost worth a journey

to the wilds of Hindostan, especially if it should arrive upon one of those sultry, oppressive days, in which the hot wind blows from a wrong quarter; when weariness and listlessness prevail, and each member of the family, stretched at length upon a sofa, can cherish no hope of entertainment beyond that afforded by a reverie, in which he may transport himself to more genial skies. The dreary monotony of time passed in this manner is sometimes broken in upon by the unexpected arrival of a *dāk* traveller, who makes his appearance without the note of preparation sounded by blows upon the tent-pins. A palanquin is seen making its way through the dust; the soiled, travel-stained, weary look of the bearers, the baggage, and utensils heaped on the top of the vehicle, announce that it belongs to a wayfarer, and presently it is deposited at the door. The servants in waiting rush in with the intelligence that there is a strange gentleman outside; the master of the house, who is of course sitting without his jacket, makes a hasty toilette, and advances to receive his guest, who enters sometimes more than half dead, red and roasted, by long exposure to hot air, cramped with lying for so many hours in a palanquin, and so completely covered with dust that it is difficult to determine what has been the original hue and texture of his garments. He is ushered, in the first instance, to the bathing-room, where a plentiful ablution, change of clothes, and a glass of brandy and water enable him to shake off his fatigue, and join the family circle. The transition from a hot, jolting conveyance, a moving dungeon, to a spacious and comparatively cool apartment, is the most enjoyable thing in the

world; the miseries of the past are forgotten, and the lately subdued and jaded traveller soon becomes sufficiently recovered to impart as much pleasure as he receives. A renewal of the journey in the cool of the evening is anticipated without dread; it is only when the great distance from station to station obliges a European to travel through the heat of the day, that much difficulty and annoyance must be endured.

The natives, Hindoos in particular, choose the most oppressive season for long journeys, which they frequently perform in the hottest hours of the four-and-twenty. Marriage processions are then to be seen traversing the roads in great abundance, and where a *bungalow* commands a view of the highway, a good deal of amusement may be derived from the fantastic pomp exhibited upon these occasions. The poorest make a faint attempt at magnificence; but their humble bridals are distinguished only by yellow garments and blaring trumpets; neither noise nor turmeric is wanting, and the eyes are dazzled and the ears split as the revel rout pass along. Camels, horses, palanquins, and *rhuts*, more or less ornamented, accompany the march of the wealthy suitor; but it is only in the marriage retinue of a great man that there is much display of wealth and grandeur. The wedding, or rather the betrothment of a son of a rich noble (for the bridegroom was a child of eight or ten years old), celebrated with all the pomp and splendour which the rank and fortune of the parties could command, afforded an agreeable spectacle to the dullest of dull cantonments. The natives affect a great deal of state, and make as much show as possible with the means which

they possess ; accordingly the march was stretched out to its utmost length. A small troop of camels, jingling all over with bells, and richly bedizened with tufts of various colours, led the van ; behind them came bullock-carriages, covered with scarlet cloth ; then a company of grave personages, mounted on tattoos ; next, two or three open palanquins, canopied with fringed curtains, in one of which the little bridegroom gleamed and glittered like a rich ornament in a velvet casket. After these, a stately elephant appeared, bearing a silver *howdah*, screened from the sun by an umbrella of all the colours of the rainbow ; this was followed by a disorderly troop of *sunars* or soldiers, ill-clad and ill-mounted, and trailing clumsy uncouth matchlocks and harquebusses along ; more camels, more bullock-carts, more servants, on horseback and on foot, armed and unarmed, some carrying spears and bucklers, and some blowing trumpets ; more elephants marching singly, at a great distance from each other ; more palanquins, some shut, some open, and all decorated with gold and silver ; and, to crown all, an old-fashioned English gig, with a nondescript kind of harness and a horse of the alligator species, wherein two men in flowing green robes and white turbans were seated, with strange incongruity, found a place amid a procession in which all else was truly Asiatic.

In gazing upon a spectacle of this nature, Europeans are often startled by the apparition of an old coach, which looks as if it had been taken off one of the stands of London, with a native head proudly stuck out of the worm-eaten, rat-eaten, worn-out, rusty

vehicle, to which neither paint nor varnish have been applied for many a long year. Highly delighted with a *bellatee garree* (European carriage), they never trouble themselves about the manner in which it may be kept ; and, as long as it will hang together, however tatterdemallion may be its condition, exhibit it on state occasions with undisguised exultation.

The bringing home of the young bride, after the betrothment had taken place, was rendered more picturesque by the passage through the cantonments being performed at night. The bells of the camels and elephants announced the approach of the cavalcade, and it certainly made a very splendid appearance by the light of innumerable torches. The palanquins glanced along like gorgeous birds, the fluttering of the fringed curtains being alone distinguishable ; the camels assumed somewhat of a supernatural appearance, as their nodding plumes, arched necks, and shapeless humps appeared and disappeared in the flickering glare ; the elephants looked like moving monuments of black marble, and strange monsters, flying griffins, and chimeras dire, might be dimly shaped out amid the promiscuous multitude of horse and foot, which spread themselves over the broad road ; while the wild discord of the music, and the shout and cry always an accompaniment of an Asiatic procession, joined to the partial illumination of flaming torches, gave to the whole an air of mystery and romance, and no fanciful imagination could forbear associating the rajah, despite his attendant in the gig, with some potent magician, summoning good and evil genii to his aid, in protecting or kidnapping the hope-

ful heir of a neighbouring monarch. In beholding these strange pageants, the wonders of an Arabian tale become realities ; we are no longer surprised at the wild phantasies of the authors ; they may justly be said to draw from nature, and to present to their readers, if not existing objects, things as they appeared in the chaotic confusion of men and animals crowding together at night. In driving home from late parties, in the Upper Provinces, Europeans frequently encounter strange groups of very unearthly character ; incantation scenes, which would make the fortune of a manager of a minor theatre, and solitary individuals so withered and so wild in their attire as to be absolutely startling. Three or four demoniac-looking personages, of a horrid blackness, half-clad in uncouth garments, will suddenly emerge from some ravine, brandishing flaring torches, and making the air ring with discordant cries, and the clang of still more fearful instruments. They seem as if they were that instant disgorged from the subterranean dominions of some mighty magician ; and it is only by an effort of reason that the mind can be divested of the idea that these masqueraders actually belong to the invisible world. The performers are usually Hindoos, engaged in religious ceremonies, and they certainly contrive to equal in horror the most frightful descriptions of the writers of fiction. A disguise of this kind is sometimes assumed to cover desperate undertakings, and even bridal processions are made subservient to the designs of robbers.

The treasure collected by officers employed in the revenue branch of the service, is frequently the object

of hostile attempts. It is always conveyed to a place of security under a guard of sepoy, and the officer commanding takes care to encamp in some strong secure place, at a considerable distance from a town or village, and where the approach of a band of marauders may be easily descried. But, on one occasion, the robbers practised a *ruse de guerre*, which proved eminently successful; they clothed themselves in yellow garments, and, crowding together in the promiscuous throngs which are commonly assembled in nuptial cavalcades, effectually deceived the sentinels, who, looking upon them as the guests of some gay wedding, did not discover their real intentions until they were surrounded, and resistance was rendered hopeless.

The inhabitants of a jungle-station frequently, during the cold weather, betake themselves to canvas, and change the scene a little by forming hunting and shooting parties in the most picturesque spots in the district. The ladies are usually included in these engagements, and when there is any congeniality of disposition, a few days or weeks may be passed very delightfully in the wildest solitudes. Elephants are too expensive animals to be generally maintained by private individuals belonging to the Anglo-Indian community; but as they are indispensable in attacking the highest species of game, they are borrowed for the time from the commissariat, or from rich natives, who are always willing to lend them, or to assist in any sport which may require the aid of those animals, which they delight to train for the field. Though hawks are frequently kept by Europeans stationed in

the Upper Provinces of Hindostan, they are seldom so numerous, or so well taught, as those belonging to native gentlemen, Hindoos especially, who, if they should be strict in their religious principles, cannot enjoy the pleasures of the chase, unless their falcons are so admirably broken in as to take the prey alive. Notwithstanding their scruples respecting the destruction of animal life, they do not object to be present at the slaughter of a hecatomb of victims. On one occasion, though no Hindoo could be found to cut the throat of a partridge captured by a hawk, and to whom a libation of blood was to be offered, a Brahmin, acting in the capacity of a chuprassee, readily relinquished his sword to a Moosulman for the purpose. Hawking in India, to those who are not bent upon the extermination of beasts of prey, is one of the most exhilarating things in the world, and the sport is peculiarly suited to feminine participation. To ladies, hog-hunting is of course quite out of the question, and there are very few whose nerves could stand against the terror and carnage of an expedition against tigers, to say nothing of the fatigue to be encountered in a chase which frequently lasts for hours under a burning sun. Hawking, where there is less excitement, may be relinquished at pleasure, and the pursuit of game leads the party into wildernesses far removed from the dwellings of man. The sylvan denizens of the soil are seen in their native haunts; the majestic nylgau, roused at the approach of intruders, scours across the plain, or crashes through the boughs of a neighbouring thicket; herds of antelopes are seen grazing, and at every step the elephant puts up some

beautiful bird, or some strange and interesting animal ; wolves and bears may be detected stealing off to a more secluded covert, whilst the porcupine utters its shrill cry of alarm, and the monkey gibbers at the passing pageant.

Wild geese afford the best sport ; they soar exceedingly high, and frequently bid defiance to the falcon's adventurous wings. Smaller birds, partridges especially, have no chance of escape, and when appearing on the edge of those basin-like valleys, which so frequently diversify the plains of India, their capture is seen to great advantage from the back of an elephant, as the spectator can look down upon the whole scene ; and following the flight of the hawk along the steep, where the frightened partridge hurries for shelter, observe the fatal precision of his aim, and see him pounce directly on the victim, which he bears to the falconer in his claw. In some parts of the country, the largest description of the hawk is trained to the chase, and its murderous talons are directed against antelopes and the smaller kinds of deer ; it darts at the head of the quarry, blinds and confuses it with its flapping wings, tears it with its beak and claws, and finally succeeds in depriving it of life. This is not, however, a common exhibition, and is seldom witnessed except at the courts of native princes. Hunting with *cheetahs* (leopards) is more commonly practised ; but though the manœuvres of the cat-like pursuer are exceedingly curious and interesting, as they develop the nature and habits of the animal, there is nothing noble, generous, or exciting in the sport. The *cheetahs*, hooded like hawks, are secured

by a slight harness to a platform fastened on a bullock cart; their keeper holds the beasts in his hand, and those who wish to obtain a good view of the chase, take a seat beside the driver. Antelopes, accustomed to the sight of bullocks, will permit them to make a much nearer approach than any less familiar animal. When the carts have arrived at a prudent distance from the herd, the driver halts, the *cheetahs* are unloosed, and espying the prey, they drop silently off the vehicle, taking care to choose the contrary side from that on which the deer are feeding. They steal, crouching along the ground, screening themselves behind every bush, hillock, or tuft of grass which may occur in their way, pausing occasionally when there seems to be any danger of a premature alarm; each has singled out his victim, and, measuring the distance with an experienced eye, they dart forward with a sudden bound. Two or three springs ensure success or disappointment; the victor alights upon his prey. But if a threatened antelope should have the good fortune to escape the first attempt, no second effort is made; the *cheetah* returns growling and in ill-humour to his keeper; he has lost his advantage, and sullenly relinquishes a field which must be won fairly by strength and speed.

The poorer class of natives, who take up the occupation of hunters for their own subsistence, or pecuniary emolument, sometimes avail themselves of the services of a bullock in approaching within shot of a herd of antelopes. Theirs is a matter of business, not of excitement, and they have no idea of allowing a chance to the objects of their pursuit. A bullock

is carefully trained for the purpose, and when his education is completed, he makes a quiet entrance into the jungles, followed closely by his master, who contrives to screen himself completely behind the animal. The bullock grazes carelessly as he advances, making circuitous and apparently unpremeditated movements; at last he arrives at a convenient distance, without having disturbed the unconscious herd; he then stands still, the *shikaree*, or hunter, fixes his clumsy matchlock along the back of the animal, and still unseen takes unerring aim: down drops the devoted antelope, and away fly the rest of the herd, dispersed and out of sight in an instant. Europeans rarely witness this kind of sport, if such it may be called; but it sometimes falls to the lot of a solitary traveller, who from some elevation obtains an extensive view over a wide plain, to have an opportunity of watching the singular manœuvres employed by the hunter and his uncouth agent.

Where the weapons at hand are inefficient for open warfare, stratagems must supply the place of more generous hostility; and even Anglo-Indians are sometimes compelled to adopt native arts, and when the assistance of elephants cannot be procured, they will condescend to lay a bait for a tiger, and sit patiently in a tree until the fierce animal shall repair to his evening repast, and they can shoot him while, in fancied security, he is indulging his appetite; others, disdaining such unwarlike defences, will encounter a tiger singly on horseback. This is of course a very difficult and dangerous enterprise; few steeds, however noble, can be brought to face an enemy of which

they entertain an instinctive dread. The vicinity of a tiger is often discovered by the distress and terror exhibited by horses, which even in their stables have been known to fall into fits of trembling and perspiration, occasioned by their secret conviction that their foe is at hand ; and when a horse is found sufficiently courageous to encounter so terrible a savage, the most extraordinary activity, coolness, presence of mind, accuracy of eye, and strength of arm, are necessary to ensure the victory. The hunter, after putting up the tiger, wheels round him in a circle at full speed, never permitting, in the rapidity of his movements, a single moment for the fatal spring ; and when the tiger, bewildered and dazzled, offers an unguarded front, pins him to earth with the thrust of a spear. Such enterprises must be of rare occurrence, and can only be contemplated by adventurous spirits delighting in the excitement produced by the wild and dangerous sports of India, and anxiously bent upon braving the most fearful terrors of the field.

A long residence in the Upper Provinces is extremely favourable to pursuits of this nature ; during protracted intervals of peace, active minds are driven to difficult and perilous exploits for the employment of their vacant hours ; inured to desperate hazards, should any real emergence call for their services, they face grim-visaged war with stern delight ; and though the scene is too distant, and the campaigns too unimportant to Europe, to attract much attention at home, the dangers dared and the deeds which are done by the gallant youth of our Eastern army, are not inferior to the most spirit-stirring enterprises chro-

nicled in the records of chivalry. Where there are no wild beasts to be encountered, fatigues and hardships of another kind are eagerly sought out. To ride easily and without stopping, that hard-trotting beast, an express-camel, becomes an object of ambition.

During the Mahratta war, one or two corps of dromedaries were formed; two men, completely armed, were mounted on each animal, but though traversing the country in an incredibly short period of time, these troops were unserviceable, in consequence of the exhaustion of the soldiers, occasioned by the dreadful jolting of their mode of conveyance. Some European officers, however, will ride these camels at their swiftest pace: thus qualifying themselves for the conveyance of orders or despatches, should their services ever be required in that way. Meanwhile, it affords an agreeable diversion to beguile time destined to be spent in almost interminable sands; and should duty or pleasure call them to less remote stations, they astonish the fastidious and refined society there, by bringing to it habits and manners contracted in lonely and sequestered places. An European officer, mounted on a camel, is a strange sight on the British side of the central provinces of India, and inevitably procures for him the appellation of *jungle-wallah*. Others exhibit themselves with their hair cut so closely to their skulls, for coolness, as to look exactly as if they had just escaped from a mad-house; some people ask who the gentleman is without a *chopper*, a witticism which can only be understood by those who are versed in the architecture of country-boats and bungalows, of which the thatched roofs are denominated *choppers*.

In the midland stations of Hindostan, a great deal of amusement may be derived from the varieties of costume and manners displayed by arrivals from Europe and Calcutta, and those from the frontier towards the Himalaya or the deserts of Nusseerabad. Where two ladies are dancing *vis-à-vis* in the same quadrille, there will be a difference of at least ten yards in the skirts of their gowns, the one expanding in the amplitude prescribed by a London or Parisian *modiste*, the other cramped in the narrow dimensions which obtained at the period of her outfit some ten years before. A few of the wardrobes of India are actual curiosities, presenting modes and manufactures now unhappily lost to the fashionable world. The writer admits with shame that her attention was once distracted from a sermon by the contemplation of a most remarkable fabric of cambric muslin, interwoven with a sort of lace-work, the like of which her eyes had never till that hour beheld ; at another time, the vision of a brown muslin spotted with gold absorbed every faculty, and arrested a due reply to *burra beebie*, who had rescued this antiquated piece of raiment from the depths of some neglected wardrobe, apparently unconscious of the extraordinary sensation it would create. The gentlemen are not a whit behind the ladies ; some of them affect the Asiatic style of dress, and wear long beards ; elderly civilians have their clothes made by native *dirzees*, after the patterns which they brought out with them, and the most eccentric coverings for the head are adopted, hats of straw or of white cotton, and foraging caps of every description ; the newly-arrived dandy gazes with horror and

surprise ; but his gay apparel soon loses its gloss ; he finds it convenient to change his cloth coat for one made of shining China silk ; the dresses of the visitors from the jungles are re-modelled, and thus an equilibrium is preserved, and people in remote districts become enlightened on the subject of modern inventions.

CHAPTER IV.

AGRA.

IN this age of tourists it is rather extraordinary that the travelling mania should not extend to the possessions of the British Government in India ; and that so few persons are induced to visit scenes and countries in the East, embellished with the most gorgeous productions of nature and of art. The city of Agra is well worthy of a pilgrimage from the uttermost parts of the globe, yet a very small number amid those who have spent many years in Hindostan are tempted to pay it a visit ; and the civil and military residents, together with casual travellers passing through to the places of their destination, alone are acquainted with a city boasting all the oriental magnificence which imagination has pictured from the glowing descriptions of Eastern tales. The Smelfungus tribe is very numerous in India ; necessity, and not “ a truant disposition,” has occasioned the greater portion of the

servants of the Company to traverse foreign lands ; and the sole remark frequently made by persons who have sojourned amid the marble temples and citron groves of Agra, consists of a simple statement, that " it is exceedingly hot." Bishop Heber, who possessed a true relish for the sublime and beautiful, and who delighted with all a poet's enthusiasm in the picturesque, has not done Agra justice in his interesting narrative. He was ill during the brief period of his sojourn there, and had come immediately from Delhi, the stately rival of the city of Acbar. This is the more unfortunate, as his work, being very popular, and considered good authority, has led a favourite writer of the day to pourtray ruin and desolation as the prominent features of Agra ; whereas, though somewhat shorn of the splendour it possessed in the times of the Moghul emperors, it is still a place of wealth and importance, inhabited by rich natives, both Moosulman and Hindoo, and carrying on an extensive trade. Should steam navigation ever be introduced with effect upon the Ganges and Jumna, there can be little doubt that the seat of government will be, at some time, removed from Calcutta to a more central station, and the probabilities are greatly in favour of Agra being the selected spot. In this event, improvements of vast magnitude may be expected to take place in the upper country. The hill stations especially will be benefited by the influx of visitors ; they must necessarily be enlarged ; roads must be made, bridges constructed, gardens cultivated, and public buildings erected, until they will offer the accommodations of European watering-places, in addi-

tion to the far superior attractions of their scenery. Persons weary of Cheltenham, Baden, Spa, and other springs of fashionable resort, may take a trip to the Himalaya, and visit the source of the Ganges by way of variety. Even now, it would be perfectly practicable for a tourist, in search of novelty, to climb the heights of the Asiatic mountains to the limits of eternal snow, that untrodden barrier which has defied, and will defy the adventurous foot of man, and return to England, without experiencing a single day in which the thermometer shall have risen beyond the bounds of moderate heat. By landing in Calcutta in the middle of October, four months of cold weather are secured, a period sufficient to admit of easy travelling through the Upper Provinces, *viâ* Benares, Lucknow, Agra, Bhurtpore, Delhi, and Meerut; from the latter station it is only a few marches, or a three days' journey by *dák* (post), to Landour, a sanatorium perched upon the crags of the Himalaya. This place, and Mussooree, another hill-cantonment, should form the head-quarters during the eight months of heat endured in the plains; and in the following October, passing through the central provinces, and visiting Jyepore, Nusseerabad, Ajmere, and Mhow, the tourist may proceed to Bombay, and take his passage home before the commencement of the hot weather.

To a lover of the picturesque, Agra is one of the most delightful stations in India; but as persons of this description form a very small portion of the community, a residence amid the splendid monuments of Moghul power is not considered desirable, in consequence of the alleged heat of the climate, and the

high prices demanded for the bungalows. It possesses a garrison, consisting of one European or King's corps, and three of Native Infantry, with their requisite staff, under the command of a brigadier. The military cantonments are the ugliest in India, being situated upon a wide bare plain, enlivened only by a few Parkinsonias,* trees which are too uniformly covered with yellow flowers to appear to advantage when not mingled with others of more varied foliage. The Jumna is completely hid from view by intervening sand banks, which also shut out the beauties of the Taaje Mahal, with the exception of its silvery dome; and the exteriors of the bungalows, with few exceptions, are hideous. They are usually built of brick, a material amply supplied by the ruins in the neighbourhood; the gateless and, sometimes fenceless compounds, have a desolate appearance; and a handsome church is the only redeeming feature in the scene. The houses, however, have good gardens, though the latter are not made ornamental to the landscape; and their interiors are remarkable for the elegance of the fitting-up, an abundance of marble furnishing chimney-pieces, cornices, and pilasters of a very superior kind of chunam; and, instead of bare white-washed walls, the apartments are decorated with handsome mouldings and other architectural ornaments. The civil lines, at the distance of two miles, are much more beautifully situated, amidst well-wooded ravines, which, during the rainy season, are covered with a verdant carpet of green, and watered by numerous nullahs. The

* So called from having been introduced into India from the Cape by Colonel Parkinson.

roads are excellent, and kept in the finest order by the labours of gangs of convicts, who are employed upon the public works of British India. Many of the houses belonging to the families of civilians are *puckha* and built in the style of those of Calcutta ; others assume a more fanciful aspect, the centre being composed of an abandoned mosque, or tomb, with wings spreading on either side.

The distance between the military and civil lines at Agra, constitutes a very considerable obstacle to the social intercourse of the station ; throughout India there exists a degree of jealousy on the part of the former, which renders them tenacious of appearing to shew too much deference to the superior wealth of the judges and collectors, whom they fancy must look down upon a poorer class. There are, of course, a few instances of civilians in high appointments, who hold themselves far above their less fortunate military compeers, a set of persons who have obtained the cognomen of “ Buhádur,” a very significant phrase, borrowed from the title of honour bestowed by natives upon great men, or assumed by those who desire to give themselves consequence ; but, generally speaking, the civilians, being fewer in number, are glad to pay attention to all the military in the neighbourhood ; and, at least during my residence at Agra, they made far less difficulty in coming over to the balls in the cantonments than was raised by the families of officers, who frequently declined invitations to the civil lines on account of the distance, or because they would not receive civilities which they were unable to return. This sort of pride is very detrimental to the

society of small communities ; and at Agra it always appears to be in full operation, the station never having had a reputation for gaiety.

There are no subscription-balls at Agra, and dancing depends upon the hospitalities exercised by private individuals ; a play is occasionally performed at the theatre, a building of no exterior beauty, and whose properties are of a very inferior order ; and races have been established, which, however, bear no proportion to the celebrity acquired by those at Meerut and Ghazeepore.

It is in the city of Agra and its environs that intellectual persons must seek gratification. The Taaje Mahal is usually deemed the most attractive object, and, considered in its character of a mausoleum, it has not its equal in the world. The reader of Eastern romance may here realize his dreams of fairy land, and contemplate those wondrous scenes so faithfully delineated in the brilliant pages of the Arabian Nights. Imagine a wild plain, broken into deep sandy ravines, the picture of rudeness and desolation, a tract as unpromising as that which Prince Ahmed traversed in search of his arrow. In the midst of this horrid wilderness, a palace of deep red stone, inlaid with white marble, and surmounted by domes, and open cupolas, appears. It is ascended by flights of steps ; in the centre is a large circular hall, with a domed roof, and a gallery running round, all in the most beautiful style of Oriental architecture. This is the gate of the Taaje Mahal, a building which, in any other place, would detain the visitant in rapture at the symmetry and grandeur of its proportions, and

the exquisite elegance of the finishing ; but the eyes have caught a glimpse of a delicious garden, and the splendours of this noble entrance are little regarded. At the end of a long avenue of graceful cypresses, whose rich foliage is beautifully mirrored in marble basins, fed with water from numerous sparkling fountains, the Taafe arises, gleaming like a fairy palace. It is wholly composed of polished marble of the whitest hue ; and if there be any faults in the architecture, they are lost in the splendour of the material, which conveys the idea of something even more brilliant than marble, mother-o'-pearl, or glistening spar. No description can do justice to this shining edifice, which seems rather to belong to the fanciful creations of a dream than to the sober realities of waking life—constructed of gathered moonbeams, or the lilies which spring in paradise. The mausoleum is placed upon a square platform of white marble, rising abruptly to the height of about twelve or fifteen feet, the steps being concealed, which is perhaps a blemish. The place of actual sepulture is a chamber within this platform ; round it on three sides are suites of apartments, consisting of three rooms in each, all of white marble, having lattices of perforated marble for the free transmission of air, and opening to the garden. At each of the four corners of the platform, a lofty minaret* springs, and the centre is occupied by an octagonal building, crowned by a dome, surrounded by open cupolas of

* These minarets, though beautiful in themselves, have a formal appearance as they stand, and look too much like high and slender castles upon a gigantic chess-board.

inferior height. Nothing can be more beautiful or more chaste : even the window-frames are composed of marble ; and it would seem as if a part of Aladdin's palace had been secured from the general wreck, and placed in the orange groves of Agra. The plan of the building, which is purely Asiatic, is said to have been the design of the founder, who placed the execution in the hands of foreigners of eminence. The interior is embellished with beautiful mosaics, in rich patterns of flowers, so delicately formed, that they look like embroidery upon white satin, thirty-five different specimens of cornelians being employed in a single leaf of a carnation ; while agates, lapis lazuli, turquoise, and other precious materials, occur in profusion. The mausoleum, washed by the Jumna, looks out upon that bright and rapid river ; and its gardens of many acres, planted with flowery forest trees, and interspersed with buildings and fountains, stretch to the banks of the stream. It is truly a place which a votary of Mohammed would form from his ideas of the paradise of the true-believer, haunted by beautiful birds of variegated plumage, and filled with blossoms of every scent and hue.

No lover of ancient or modern times ever testified more genuine attachment to the memory of the object of his affection, than that which is recorded by this enchanting edifice. It was erected under the auspices of the Emperor Shah Jehan, the son of Jehanguire, and the father of Aurungzebe, who, however, failing in his duty as a son, in his character of a husband and a father stands unrivalled. When his beloved wife, Moom Taza Mhal, lay dying, in the passionate anguish

of his heart he assured her, that as, while existing, she surpassed in loveliness and virtue all the women of her time, so, after her decease, she should possess a monument which should be unequalled in the world. He fulfilled his promise. It was his intention to have built a mausoleum of similar magnificence upon the opposite side of the river, for himself, and to have connected both by a marble bridge across the Jumna ; but the troubles of his reign did not allow him to complete this superb design, and his bones repose beside those of the object dearest to him while on earth. To Shah Jehan's strong paternal affection we are indebted for our first settlement in Hindostan ; he gave a grant of land in Bengal to an English physician travelling through Agra, as a token of his gratitude for the restoration of one of his daughters, whose malady was subdued by the stranger's skill and attention.

In wandering over the princely gardens of the Taaje Mahal, the monarch's virtues alone can be remembered, and it is with feelings of no common gratification that those who are not wholly engrossed by passing objects, add a flower to the fresh coronals daily strewed upon the monarch's grave. The natives of Agra are justly proud of the Taaje Mahal ; they are pleased with the admiration manifested by strangers, and gratified by the care and attention bestowed to keep it in repair : upon Sunday evenings especially, crowds of Moosulmans of all descriptions, rich and poor, visit the gardens, and contribute not a little, by their picturesque groups, to the attraction of the scene.

At the distance of about a mile from the "palace-tomb," for that is the signification of its name, stands the fort of Agra, a place of great strength in former times, before the introduction of fire-arms. One side is defended by the river, the others are surrounded by high battlemented walls of red stone, furnished with turrets and loop-holes, and, in addition to several postern entrances, a most magnificent building, called the Delhi-gate. Perhaps Lord Byron himself, when he stood upon the Bridge of Sighs, his heart swelling with reminiscences of Othello, Shylock, and Pierre, scarcely experienced more overwhelming sensations than the humble writer of this paper, when gazing, for the first time, upon the golden crescent of the Moslems, blazing high in the fair blue heavens, from the topmost pinnacle of this splendid relique of their power and pride. The delights of my childhood rushed to my soul; those magic tales, from which, rather than from the veritable pages of history, I had gathered my knowledge of eastern arts and arms, arose in all their original vividness. I felt that I was indeed in the land of genii, and that the gorgeous palaces, the flowery labyrinths, the orient gems, and glittering thrones so long classed with ideal splendours, were not the fictitious offspring of romance.

Europe does not possess a more interesting relique of the days of feudal glory than that afforded by the fort of Agra. The interior presents a succession of inclined planes, so constructed (the stones with which they are paved being cut into grooves) that horses, and even carriages may pass up and down. The illustrations of fortified places, in Froissart's Chronicle,

offer an accurate representation of these ascents, where knights on horseback are depicted riding down a steep hill while descending from the walls.

The fort is of very considerable extent, and contains many objects of interest and curiosity. The Mootie Musjid, or pearl mosque, disputes the palm of beauty with the Taaje Mahal, and is by many persons preferred to that celebrated edifice. Neither drawing nor description can do it justice, for the purity of the material and the splendour of the architecture defy the powers of the pencil and the pen. An oblong hall stretches its arcades along one side of a noble quadrangle, surrounded by richly sculptured cloisters, whence at intervals spring light and elegant cupolas, supported upon slender pillars. The whole is of polished white marble, carved even to the very slabs that compose the pavement; and when moonlight irradiates the scene, the effect is magical.

Acbar was the first of the Moghul emperors who, preferring Agra as a residence to its neighbour Delhi, embellished and beautified the city; his name, as the "mighty lord," is of course held in great reverence by the inhabitants, and his tomb, a gorgeous pyramidal structure, at about five miles distance, is scarcely less an object of admiration than the Taaje. The durbar, or hall of audience, a magnificent apartment, is converted into an arsenal; but the marble palace remains nearly in the same state in which it was left by the Jauts, when the city was taken by Lord Lake. After the beautiful buildings already mentioned, this palace, though very rich and splendid, has comparatively little to recommend it. If, however,

wanting in the external attractions of its prouder rivals, it is not less interesting on account of the recollections attached to it, having been the residence of some of the most celebrated conquerors of the East. It is pleasantly situated upon the banks of the Jumna, which its balconied chambers overlook. The hall, formerly ceiled with silver, is still a fine apartment; but the smaller suites of rooms, being more singular, are more interesting to a stranger. These are mostly of an octagonal form, leading out of each other, or connected by a smaller antichamber; they are composed of white marble, the walls, floors, and roofs being all of the same material, the former decorated with mosaics of flowers rudely executed in many-coloured agates and cornelians. The windows open upon narrow balconies, having very low parapet walls, which overhang the Jumna: the bosom of the river is gay with boats, and the opposite bank finely planted, and adorned with bright pavilions glancing from between the trees, or raised upon some jutting point of land. From these suites, flights of marble stairs lead to the roof, which is flat, and commands a still nobler view. The plan of the palace is very curious as seen from this elevation: with the exception of the range of buildings fronting the river, it is laid out in small quadrangles, each with its garden or its bath in the centre. One of these, destined for a retreat during the hot winds, is particularly curious. It contains a square apartment of tolerable dimensions, unprovided with windows. The walls are lined with fantastic ornaments of spar, silver, and other glittering materials, intermixed with small

oddly-shaped pieces of looking-glass ; the pavement is cut into channels, for the purpose of allowing a perpetual flow of running water in the hot season. Here the emperors were wont to retire during the most sultry hours, substituting the glare of torches for the light of day, and admiring, doubtless, the barbaric splendour with which they were surrounded.

The palace of Agra has been frequently irradiated by the presence of the 'Light of the Harem,' the beautiful Nourmahal, one incident in whose eventful life has been immortalized by the pen of Mr. Moore. The marvellous adventures of her history might fill a volume. Shere Afkun, the husband who stood between her and a throne, was one of the paladins of Eastern chivalry, and the deeds imputed to him, by authentic records, are only to be paralleled in the pages of romance : he seems to have formed his character after that of Rustum Khan, or some other poetical hero equally celebrated. He is said to have rushed unarmed upon a lion, and quelled the monster single-handed ; and when, after a hundred victories, in perilous adventures, in which his cruel master involved him, for the purpose of procuring his death : he fell at last, in a struggle with twelve assassins ; he yielded rather to the determined hatred of the king than to the weapons of his murderers ; throwing away a life embittered by ingratitude. Nourmahal, by her intrigues for her children's elevation, her caprice, and her revenge, endangered the sceptre of her imperial husband a thousand times, yet maintained her ascendancy over him to the latest period of life. Once he was wrought upon, by the representations of a

faithful friend, to consent to her death, but could not refuse a farewell interview: the consequences were such as had been predicted; she regained her influence, and the realm was again distracted by civil dissension. Highly accomplished, according to the fashion of her country and the age in which she flourished, Nourmahal was indeed the 'light of the harem;' her inexhaustible fancy devised new schemes of pleasure for each day and hour, and in her seductive society a luxurious monarch forgot his duties as well as his cares. Nourmahal can make no pretensions to excellence as a wife; for, if not consenting to the persecution of her first husband, she tacitly sanctioned his rival's pretensions, while to her second she brought discord and ruin; but, as a parent and a child, she seems to have acted in an exemplary manner.

On the opposite bank of the Jumna, near the stately gardens of the Rambaugh, said to have been originally planted and laid out by Jehanghire, stands one of the most beautiful specimens of Oriental architecture which India can boast—the tomb of Utta ma Dowlah, the beloved father of the empress Nourmahal. Anxious to ensure its durability, she proposed to erect this monument of silver, as a less perishable material than stone; but some judicious friend assured her that marble would not be so liable to demolition, and, accordingly, time alone has injured a building which the Jauts were not tempted to plunder. It is lamentable that the British Government should have limited its expenditure to the repairs of the Taaje Mahal, and that so beautiful a gem of art should be suffered, for want of the necessary repairs, to fall into decay;

its surrounding garden is now a wilderness, destitute of fences, and this exquisite monument is left to the care of a few poor natives, who lament over the neglect sustained by the great lord, once the pride and glory of the East. The attention paid to the dead, forms a beautiful trait in the Moosulmaun character. Kingdoms have passed away, and dynasties have failed, and while nothing of the magnificence of the silent tenants of the tomb is left save the name, their graves are still honoured and respected, and flowers are strewed over them, and lamps are burned, by those who have long submitted to foreign dominion. Utta ma Dowlah's tomb is one of the most attractive spots in the immediate neighbourhood of Agra. It is within the compass of a morning or evening drive; and the gardens of the Rambaugh, in its close vicinity, are as splendid as those we read of in the Arabian tales. From the roof of this monument one of those views are obtained which, once seen, can never be forgotten. The blue waters of the Jumna wind through a rich champaign country, with gardens stretching down on either side to its rippling current; opposite, the city of Agra, with its bastioned fort, its marble palace, splendid cupolas, and broad ghauts, intermixed with trees, stands, in all the pomp of eastern architecture: below, in silvery pride, the lustrous Taaje Mahal is seen; and, far as the eye can reach, country-houses, decorated with light pavilions springing close to the margin of the stream, diversify the landscape.

The tomb of Acbar, like that of Utta ma Dowlah, is lapsing into a state of dilapidation. Its splendid gate is threatening to fall, and the once luxuriant park is

now wild and desolate. It is on the road to this celebrated mausoleum that the decay of Agra is most visible; at every step, we pass the remains of houses, which shew how far the city formerly extended. Secundra, a village in the close vicinity of Acbar's tomb, also has fallen from its high estate, and exhibits a succession of ruined buildings. Its name affords one of the numerous evidences of the fond belief entertained by the natives of Hindostan, that Alexander the Great crossed the Indus. As he could only have traversed India as its conqueror, it is extraordinary that they should cling so tenaciously to the idea; but numerous towns, which he is supposed either to have founded or visited, are named after him *Secundra*, and the people imagine that they possess his remains; a tomb at the summit of Secundermallee, a mountain in the Carnatic, being said to be that of Alexander. Probably the invasions of some of his successors may have led to the error: but it is one too strongly cherished to be abandoned, for all castes reverence his memory, and boast his exploits as if they had cause to be proud of both.

The mausoleum of Acbar is of a character admirably suited to the splendid barbarian to whom it is dedicated. It is more difficult to describe than the *TaaJe Mahal*, to which, however, it does not bear the slightest resemblance. Superb colonnades of white marble sweep on either side a gigantic pyramid of red stone. Below, in a dark vault, illumined only by a single lamp, lies the body of Acbar; but each of many stories arising above contains a sarcophagus, placed over the spot where his remains are interred;

and the lofty building terminates in a square roofless chamber of white marble, whose walls are perforated in exquisite patterns, and which enclose the last and the most beautiful of the marble coffins. Narrow flights of stairs lead to a terraced platform surrounding low corridors, and decorated at the angles with open cupolas, faced with blue enamel and gold ; a second flight leads to another platform of smaller dimensions, similarly embellished, and a third and a fourth story succeed. The view from each is magnificent, and the design, though certainly grotesque, is rendered majestic by the air of grandeur imparted by the immense size of the building. At Futtehpore Secri, and at Deeg, distant a few marches from the city of Agra, there are equally splendid remains of Moslem glory. Bhurtpore also, the strong-hold of the Jauts, and Gwalior, a fort supposed to be impregnable until stormed and taken by a young British officer, the residence of Scindia, are within an easy journey ; together with Muttra and Bindrabund, the seats of Hindoo superstition, which possess several extremely curious and ancient temples. The profusion of marble, with which Agra abounds, has been brought from Oodipore, and the adjoining district of Bundelkhund has furnished its more precious stones.

CHAPTER V.

SHOPS AND SHOPPING.

THE attentions and flattery which ladies, who possess any claims to admiration, receive in India, must be exceedingly gratifying to those who are consoled by such homage for the loss, or rather the curtailment, of one of the most delightful recreations of the sex—namely, *shopping*. In many parts of the Upper Provinces, years may elapse without affording an opportunity for the purchase of a single European article, excepting by commission. Friends at some distant station must be applied to; and should the supply of goods not be very superabundant, the refuse of the *box-wallah's* stores are rummaged over, and the purchaser must take what she can get, and be thankful.

Remote inland stations are very rarely visited by travelling merchants, who are afraid of incurring the expense of the conveyance of their goods upon an uncertainty, and thus trade is wholly confined to native dealers; a solitary *box-wallah* making his appearance occasionally, and asking upon his arrival such an extravagant price for his merchandize, as to render the purchase almost out of the question. Europeans are expected to pay exorbitantly for the products of their own country when the supply is scanty; and ladies have often the mortification of seeing an article,

for which a very fair price has been refused, figuring on the person of one of their attendants, who has got it for next to nothing. Stations on the river are better supplied ; few boats come up without bringing some small investment, by which the *dandies* (boatmen) hope to increase the profits of their voyage ; and European shopkeepers frequently engage a *budgerow*, freighting the vessel with all sorts of articles for which there is any demand. Upon their arrival at the *ghaut*, they send a catalogue round to the different resident families, with the prices affixed, and too frequently a tantalizing notice, “ all sold,” against the items most in request.

The joy with which the arrival of any long-desired object is hailed, of which the attainment was nearly hopeless, is great. Ladies’ slippers, especially of European manufacture, which happen to fit, seem like a blessing sent from heaven, after having gone almost barefoot in the soft, ill-shaped, spongy-soled shoes of native construction. Even Chinese Crispins, though they are by far the best to be found in India, and bear a very high reputation, do not supply their fair customers with those Cinderella-like shoes, which alone are fitted for delicate feet. The upper portion may be constructed of beautiful and appropriate materials, satin or prunella ; but there is always a falling-off in the soles, which are made of leather not sufficiently tanned, while the heels are never properly stiffened. Native shoemakers succeed better with gentlemen’s boots, &c., those from Europe soon becoming too hard to be wearable. The happiest efforts of Hoby must be discarded for a base imitation,

which has the merit of being more comfortable and better suited to the climate. A wide street in Calcutta, called the Cossitollah, is almost filled with the shops of Chinese shoe-makers, who make satin slippers, to order, at four shillings a pair, and prunella or jean for three. It seems a thriving trade, these operatives being always well dressed in the costume of their country, wearing upper garments of silk when they walk abroad, or repair to European houses to take orders and measures. Some of the native shoes are very handsome, but they can only be worn by foreign residents as slippers when in their dressing rooms; the heel, though it may be raised at pleasure, is laid down across the inner part of the sole; the points are peaked, and turned up; and the whole is stiffened with embroidery, beneath which a very small portion of the cloth or velvet composing the shoe is to be seen.

The only shops in Calcutta which make much shew on the outside, are those of the chemists and druggists, who bring all the London passion for display to a foreign country; they exhibit splendid and appropriate fronts duly embellished with those crystal vases, in which gems of the most brilliant dye appear to be melted. They are flourishing concerns, and the establishment of manufactories of soda-water has added not a little to their profits. Until of late years, this refreshing beverage, which forms one of the greatest luxuries in a tropical climate, was imported from Europe and sold at a very high price; there is now a large establishment at Futtighur, which sends out supplies all over the upper country.

An officer, having a high command at the time that Java was taken from the Dutch, found a mineral spring upon the island, of bright sparkling bubbling water, as delicious and refreshing as that which, when bottled, and stamped with the seal of the Duke of Nassau, travels to every quarter of the globe. He instantly made the discovery known to the captain of a trader, who freighted his vessel with it for the Calcutta market, where it obtained a rapid sale; but it does not appear that any permanent advantage was derived from this event, or that the Dutch government were aware of the existence of this fountain, which springs in the midst of a thick forest, and is in all probability only the resort of the poor natives in its vicinity.

The European jewellers' shops in Calcutta are large and handsome; they do not make any shew on the outside, but the interiors are splendid; the pavement of one or two is of marble, and the glass-cases on the various counters display a tempting variety of glittering treasures—diamonds of the first water, pearls of price, with every precious stone than can be named, in rich profusion. The setting of these gems is exceedingly beautiful, and according to the most fashionable patterns of London or Paris, neither of those places boasting a more superb assortment; but the prices are so ruinous, that it is wonderful where sufficient custom can be obtained to support establishments of the kind, of which there are at least four, in addition to the vast number of native artisans, who are not only exclusively employed by their own countrymen, but do a great deal of work for Euro-

peans. Nothing could be more unconscionable than the profits which English jewellers sought and obtained for their goods in those days in which wealth flowed into Calcutta from many sources now cut off. Hitherto the European shopkeepers of Calcutta have transacted business in the most arbitrary manner, according to their own devices, without any reference to the regulations of trade at home.* They have had no competition to dread excepting with the natives, whose retail business, though extensive, has been carried on in a silent, unostentatious manner.

Formerly, an idea was entertained that European goods could only be obtained in perfection from European dealers ; but this notion is now exploded, and it will be seen, in the course of these remarks, that the shopkeepers of both countries obtain their supplies from the self-same sources. It is the policy of Europeans to cast a stigma on their native competitors ; for, living at an expensive rate, they are obliged to charge enormously for their commodities ;

* The jewellers, especially, set no bounds to the exorbitance of their demands. The counterpart of a gold smelling-bottle set with precious stones, which was sold in London for fifteen pounds, had the modest price of seventy affixed to it in Calcutta. A common chain of hair, with a locket attached to it, of the plainest description, was charged seven pounds ten ; not being executed according to order, it was sent back for alteration, and sixteen shillings added to the original bill, for the reparation of the blunders made by the workmen. A perfumer charged six shillings for an old bottle sent with a sample which was disapproved ; and whole pages might be filled with similar instances of the utter disdain of the recognized principles of trade exhibited by the shopkeepers of Calcutta.

while the humbler-minded native, whose whole establishment is maintained at a very small cost, is enabled to sell at a fair profit. In their anxiety to secure the genuine productions of Hoffman, or some other noted London house, families have sent to the accredited agents of these traders in Calcutta, paying of course the highest price, and have afterwards discovered that the vender, being out of the article, has kept the messenger waiting, while he despatched one of his own people to the bazaar, where it was to be had for about a fifth part of the money put down to their account.

Fortunes, however, are not accumulated in the rapid manner which might be surmised from the immense profits thus obtained ; the goose is too often killed for the sake of its golden eggs, and customers are driven away in disgust by some piece of rapacity practised upon them. The princely style of living, also, affected by Calcutta shopkeepers, forms another drawback ; they spend nearly as much as they gain, there being little or no difference between the establishment of a first-rate tradesman and that of a civil servant. The modest few, who are content to occupy their houses of business, and who do not display close carriages and services of plate until they have realized sufficient capital for the indulgence of such luxuries, must inevitably acquire considerable wealth ; at least the opportunity has been offered under the old regime. But the stern necessity for retrenchment felt by so large a portion of the community, and the paralyzation of trade consequent on the late failures, together with the host of adventurers, which the alteration of the

East-India Company's charter will in all probability send out, cannot fail to effect a striking change in the mercantile classes of Calcutta.

Next to the jeweller's shops, the most magnificent establishment in the city is that of the principal bookseller, Thacker and Co.; there are others of inferior note, which have circulating libraries attached to them; but the splendid scale of this literary emporium, and the elegance of its arrangements, place it far above all its competitors. The profit obtained upon books is more moderate than that of any other European commodity, the retail prices being entirely regulated by those of the London market; rupees are reckoned for shillings; a book which is sold at the publishers at home for a pound, is charged at twenty rupees in Calcutta; and, considering the cost of freight and insurance, the perishable nature of the commodity, and the very great care requisite to secure both leaves and binding from being injured by damp, or devoured by insects, the price cannot be considered high. Books intended for sale must be carefully taken down from the shelf and wiped every day, and not only the outside, but the interior also, must be examined; a work of time which, in a large establishment, will occupy a great number of servants. The warping of splendid bindings in hot weather, and the rusts and mildews of the rainy season, must be taken into account; while the white ants being no respectors of engravings, notwithstanding the greatest care, a *hiatus* will sometimes be visible in the centre of some superb specimen of art from the *burin* of Finden, Heath, or others of equal celebrity. The most expensive standard works

are always procurable at this establishment ; and though it may be cheaper to literary clubs and book societies to import their own supplies from London, so much must be left to the discretion of the agent employed, and, in the trade, there is such great temptation to get rid of usaleable volumes, that, in the end, little saving is effected.

Immense consignments of books sometimes come out to Calcutta, through different mercantile houses, which are sold by auction, and are often knocked down for a mere trifle. American editions of works of eminence also find their way into the market at a very cheap rate ; and those who are content with bad paper, worse printing, and innumerable typographical errors, may furnish a library of the best authors at a small expense. The way in which a fashionable novel is got up is of little importance out of London, where an inelegant appearance would condemn the ablest production of the day ; but in works of science, and those intended for the diffusion of useful knowledge, the mistakes and misprints, which are of constant occurrence in the American editions, may produce mischievous consequences. The inhabitants of Calcutta or its occasional residents, can alone be benefited by the shoal of books brought upon the coast by a fleet more than ordinarily freighted with literary merchandize. The supply at out-stations never is superabundant ; it is only in such places as Meerut and Cawnpore, that booksellers' shops are to be found, and their catalogues are exceedingly scanty, people generally preferring to send to Calcutta than to take the chance of what may be obtained from a shop-

keeper, who has not sufficient custom to lay in an extensive stock. At the Cape of Good Hope, the beach is said sometimes to be literally strewed with novels; an occurrence which takes place upon the wreck of a ship freighted from the warehouses of Paternoster Row; and certainly, in the streets of Calcutta, those who run may read; for books are thrust into the palanquin-doors, or the windows of a carriage, with the pertinacity of the Jews of London, by natives, who make a point of presenting the title-pages and the engravings upside down. Some of these books seem to be worthy of the Minerva press in its worst days; and it is rather curious, that novels which are never heard of in England, half-bound in the common pale blue covers so long exploded, and which do not figure in any of the advertisements ostentatiously put forth on the wrappers of magazines, &c., are hawked about in the highways and byeways of Calcutta; and, as they are not expressly intended for foreign markets, it must be presumed, though the fact appears doubtful, that there is some sale for them at home, and that "Mysterious Involvements," "Errors of the Imagination," and "Delicate Dilemmas," still find supporters amongst the twaddlers of both sexes.

Though the jewellers must be styled the ruination shops of Calcutta, the establishment of Messrs. Tulloh and Co. may be called the Howell and James of the city of palaces. It is seldom without a vast concourse of carriages at the door, and the attractions within are of a superior order. On the ground-floor, a large but by no means handsome hall is set apart for auctions; a pulpit is erected in the centre, and every descrip-

tion of property (houses, horses, carriages, &c. down to thimbles and needles) comes under the hammer in the course of a short time ; sales of all kinds being very frequent. The auction-room is accessible to males alone ; it is open to the entrance-hall, but should a lady wander by mistake into the forbidden precincts, she becomes the talk of Calcutta ; it is an act of *griffinism*, which strikes the whole community with astonishment and horror. A broad flight of stairs leads to a suite of apartments above, in which there is a multifarious assortment of merchandize, oddly enough contrasted, the merest trumpery being often placed in juxtaposition with articles of great value. The walls are hung with framed engravings, many of them from plates nearly worn out, intermixed with others of a superior description, and a few bad paintings ; an accurate knowledge of the art being confined to a very small number of persons, and the worst specimens having as good a chance, especially with the natives, of procuring purchasers, as those of a higher order. The tables and counters are covered with glass cases, containing various kinds of British and foreign *bijouterie* ; others support immense quantities of China and glass, lamps, lustres, and mirrors ; there are quantities of silk mercery and linen drapery, and upholstery of all sorts. At one time, a tempting collection of furniture, *en suite*, fitted for a boudoir, was displayed in these ware-rooms, which would have formed an appropriate decoration for the most *recherché* cabinet of the fairest queen in the world. It consisted of a work sofa, and circular table, six chairs, and a couch of the beautiful black lacker, which even Chinese art cannot imitate.

The landscapes were of the richest and most splendid enamel, and the cushions and draperies of pale green damask. They had been made in Japan, to order, from drawings or models sent from Calcutta, and were therefore of the most fashionable and approved form.

The gentleman who had despatched this splendid commission did not live to see it completed, and it was consigned by his executors to Messrs. Tulloh and Co., to be sold for the benefit of the estate. Many bright eyes were directed towards these elegant decorations, although the circumstance of their not being of European manufacture lessened their value in the estimation of the greater number of gazers, who would have preferred glittering trumpery from France. The expense rendered a speculation for the English market rather hazardous; the price of each chair was four pounds, which, together with the freight and the *ad valorem* duty imposed at the custom-house of London, would have rendered it too costly for a fair chance of profit. Stuffed Chinese birds, beautifully arranged in glass cases, are amongst the rarities of Messrs. Tulloh's emporium; these were reckoned cheap at fifty pounds a case, and in all probability found purchasers in the captains of trading-vessels. Native sircars, who speak English, attend to acquaint the visitors with the different prices of the articles; but there are no chairs for the accommodation of the ladies, who, in the hottest weather, must either walk about, stand, or sink exhausted upon the stairs. Large consignments of goods, to be sold by auction upon some future day, are frequently exhibited; but ladies, however anxious

they may be to become purchasers, are not permitted to select any of the lots at a fair price, although the sale may be so peremptory as to amount almost to giving them away. Such is the despotism of custom at Calcutta! Flaming advertisements, which put the ornate and elaborate productions of George Robins to shame, draw crowds of carriages to Tulloh's rooms; and great is the disappointment of the fair visitants, when, as it frequently happens, they see the old-remembered articles in their accustomed places, as well known as the Ochterlony monument, with as little chance of ever being removed from their site. No abatement whatever is made in the price, in consequence of the dilapidations which time may have occasioned; bargains are only to be procured at auctions, and the stock remains on hand during time immemorial, while newer and more fashionable importations of the same nature are knocked down to the highest bidder for any thing they will fetch.

Mackenzie and Lyall, and Leyburn and Co., have establishments similar to that of Messrs. Tullohs, but neither so extensive nor so splendid. The sircars in attendance (fine gentlemen, profusely arrayed in white muslin, and evidently fattening upon their profits), assume a cavalier air, and seem to take any disparagement of their employers' goods in high dudgeon. Auction-rooms are attached to the premises of both these parties, and the heads of all the establishments are expected to officiate in turn. This is a *sine quâ non*, and many gentlemen who would otherwise have devoted their time and property to mercantile pursuits, have been prevented from entering into a partnership

with these firms, in consequence of the unpleasant nature of the duties. According to the old system, an auctioneer, however respectable his connexions might be, and whatever his previous rank, was not admitted into society. The rigid exclusiveness of etiquette has somewhat relaxed in the present day, and military and civil servants do not object to meet at other houses, or receive at their own, those persons who were formerly considered to be quite beyond the pale. Still the ascent of the rostrum is considered to entail the loss of caste ; and it is supposed that the rigid enforcement of the rule is made to preserve equality amongst the partners of the establishment, who are, or were, all rendered equally unpresentable at the vice-regal court.

Besides the quantity of goods daily disposed of at auctions, there are vast accumulations, which seem to be utterly forgotten, in the *godowns*, or warehouses, belonging to every merchant. The term applied to these receptacles is a corruption of the Malay word *Gadong*. The ransacking of the vaults and store-places of Calcutta, and the discovery of all the strange things which the rats and white ants have left unconsumed, would be an amusing employment. What a quantity of forgotten lumber would see the light ! Patent lever fids, and other vaunted inventions, equally at a discount, lie mouldering in these recesses with things of greater value and utility, crates of china and glass, hardware, perfumery, &c. &c. Perhaps in no other place are there such numerous commodities put out of sight, and totally out of memory, as at Calcutta. The consignees who have failed to dispose of goods

according to their invoice prices, and who have not received instructions to sell them by auction, allow them to choke up their warehouses without an effort for their rescue from oblivion. All that is perishable is, of course, speedily demolished—a destiny little anticipated by the sanguine speculator, who perchance hoped to lay the foundation of his wealth in the Calcutta market.

Though this market is sometimes overstocked with the luxuries of the table, yet as the “eaters of ham and the eaters of jam,” as the European community have been styled by a witty writer in the *Bengal Annual*, are insatiate in their demand for the sweet and savoury importations from oil, pickle, and confectionary shops, they form the safest investment. Upon the arrival of a ship freighted with preserved salmon, lobsters, oysters, herrings, and other exotic fish, hams, reindeer-tongues, liqueurs, dried fruits, and a long list of foreign dainties, the wholesale purchaser, anxious to sell them in their freshest and purest state, usually puts forth a series of advertisements, in which the art of puffing is carried to its fullest extent. Nothing is too absurd to be printed in the Calcutta newspapers; the vauntings of Day and Martin must hide their diminished heads before those which figure in our eastern periodicals. Numerous pens are engaged in the composition; the young men in the “Buildings,” the grand patronizers of tiffins and suppers, frequently lending their assistance at a sounding paragraph, and encouraging the perpetration of divers execrable jokes and familiar invitations in the worst taste imaginable. Cheese, in these shops, is sold for three shillings a

pound ; ham frequently at four, and every thing else in proportion.

Happily, the economical part of society may furnish their tables at a cheaper rate. The native bazaars of Calcutta, in which European goods are sold, though not very tempting in appearance, are well stocked. They consist of a collection of narrow streets, furnished with shops on either side, some of which have shew-rooms on the upper floor, but all darker, dirtier, and more slovenly than those in the fashionable quarters of the city. The *Soodagurs*, fat, sleek, well-dressed men, clad in white muslin, and having the mark of their caste (if Hindoos) painted in gold upon the forehead and down the nose, stand at their doors, inviting customers to enter. Capital bargains are to be obtained by those who are willing to encounter the heat, fatigue, and abominations which beset their path. It is not, however, necessary to inspect these districts in person, as a sircar may be employed, or samples of the goods sent for. The millinery exhibited in these places is absolutely startling, and people are puzzled to guess how it can ever be disposed of ; but this mystery is solved by an apparition not unfrequent, a half (or rather whole) caste female—for many of the Portuguese are blacker than the natives—belonging to the lower ranks, attired in the European costume. No Christian of European descent, however remote, ever wears a native dress. Rich Indo-British ladies attire themselves in the latest and newest fashions of London and Paris, greatly to their disadvantage, since the Hindostanee costume is so much more becoming to the dark countenances and pliant figures of Eastern

beauties : those of an inferior class content themselves with habiliments less in vogue, caring little about the date of their construction, provided the style be European. At native festivals, the wives of Portuguese drummers, and other functionaries of equal rank, are to be seen amid the crowd, arrayed in gowns of blue satin, or pink crape, fantastically trimmed ; with satin slippers on their feet, their hair full-dressed, and an umbrella carried over their heads by some ragged servant, making altogether an appearance not very unlike that of Maid Marian on May-day. To these ladies, in process of time, are consigned the blonde lace, or silver lama dresses, to which, on their first arrival in India, so exorbitant a price was affixed, that nobody could venture to become a purchaser. After displaying themselves for years in a glass case at Leyburn's, they suddenly disappeared, remaining in the deepest oblivion, until some lucky *box-wallah* procures a customer unacquainted with the changes which have taken place in the London fashions since the period of their debüt from the *boutique* of a first-rate professor.

Amidst an intolerable quantity of rubbish, articles of value may be picked out ; the piece-goods are equal to those which are obtainable in magazines of higher pretensions, and the hams, cheeses, oil-man's stores, &c. are of the best quality ; and furniture, palanquins, in short, all the necessaries and conveniences of life, are to be found at these bazaars. The shopkeepers are, for the most part, very rich ; native settlers in Calcutta having derived more benefit from the increasing opulence of the city, than any other class of its

inhabitants, since the greater part of the wealth flows through their hands. Having large capitals, they are enabled to purchase the whole of a captain's investments direct from the ship ; the principal European establishments do the same, putting about twenty per cent. upon the original price. Many of an inferior class, having no ready money, are obliged to go into the China bazaar, and buy from the natives (perhaps upon credit) those European commodities they are unable to procure at first-hand ; yet these men live in the same style as the large capitalist, driving about in the streets in buggies, and disdaining the thrift and economy which their brethren at home are compelled to practise.

Under the British Government, the Mussulmans or Hindoos, who have accumulated property, are not afraid of making a display of it in their shops or warehouses ; destitute of those apprehensions which, in the days of anarchy and despotism, embittered the enjoyment of riches, they pursue their avocations with a keenness and avidity which bid defiance to all rival efforts. Ready-money customers do well to make their purchases of persons willing to sell at a fair profit ; but there is some danger of getting into debt, or borrowing largely from a Hindoo. The Jews—a class of persons with whom, in other places, pecuniary dealings are to be dreaded—form in Calcutta so small a portion of the community as scarcely to be worth naming. They have little chance against the sircars, banyans, and money-changers professing Hindooism, whose usurious practices far exceed any thing related of the scattered tribes of Israel.

Shops at up-country stations, without being half so well supplied, are generally ten times dearer than those of Calcutta. Raspberry-jam, the preserve most in request at an Indian table, bears a most preposterous price ; a jar, which is sold in London for about four shillings, will cost twenty-four, and can never be purchased for less than sixteen. The charge at Cawnpore for half-a-pint of salad-oil is six shillings ; and, in a camp, a two-pound square jar of pickles, and a pine cheese, have sold for three pounds each—an act of extravagance in the consumer which is without any excuse, the native pickles being infinitely superior to those brought from England, and the Hissar cheeses of far better quality than the importations, which are always either dry or rancid.

There are at least half-a-dozen French and English milliners of note settled in Calcutta, some of whom make regular voyages to Paris and London, for the purchase of their own investments. The displays of their shew-rooms materially depend upon the shipping arrivals ; sometimes there is a “beggarly account of empty boxes,” and at others the different apartments are replete with temptations. The high rents of houses, in good situations, in Calcutta, and the necessity of keeping large establishments of servants, preclude the possibility of obtaining goods of any kind, at these fashionable marts, at low prices. The milliners of Calcutta seem to depend entirely upon supplies from Europe ; they have never thought of enlisting Chinese manufactures into their service. Large importations of silks, satins, damasks, crapes, &c. arrive from Canton, and some of the higher

orders of native merchants have pattern-books to shew, filled with the richest of these fabrics woven in the most exquisite patterns ; but the ladies of Calcutta disdain to appear in dresses which would be eagerly coveted by those of the great capitals of Europe. Chinese silks and satins are scarcely to be seen in any of the shops ; if they should be wanted, they must be sought out like the Cashmeres, the Dacca muslins, and the Benares tissues, concealed from public view in chests and warehouses. At half the expense of their present apparel, the Calcutta belles might be more splendidly attired than any female community in the world ; but the rage for European frippery is so great, that the most magnificent fabrics of the East would have no chance against a painted muslin. If these rich products were more seen, the purchase would be more highly appreciated ; but the custom of the country, founded in all probability on the deleterious effects of the climate, forbids the outward shew which forms the characteristic, and the attraction also, of a London shop. The dampness of the atmosphere of Bengal is ruinous to every delicate article exposed to it ; and the natives of India have not yet learned the methods by which careful English dealers preserve their stock from dust and dilapidation, nor can they acquire these arts from their European employers, who are in a great measure ignorant of the principles of trade, and are induced to become general dealers in consequence of finding it the most profitable speculation. The indolence occasioned by the heat is usually too great to admit of much personal superintendence ; the details are left to native assis-

tants, and, with very few exceptions, every kind of merchandize is huddled together in confusion, or arranged in the most tasteless manner.

The jewellers and the establishment of the leading bookseller have already been exempted from this charge, and the praise which their respective owners merit, must be awarded to the European proprietors of a shop, the prettiest in Calcutta, devoted wholly to the sale of Chinese goods. There is a constant succession of new articles to be seen in this shop, captains of traders and people desirous of sending presents to England, speedily sweeping away the whole stock. The goods are charged at about double the price for which they may be purchased at Canton ; but there are always many pretty things which come within the reach of humble purses, and the privilege of looking over some of the most beautiful specimens of human ingenuity is worth a few rupees. This shop, though not large, occupies a good situation upon the Esplanade ; it is remarkably clean and cheerful, offering a striking contrast to the dens of dirt and darkness, which in many parts of the city look more like rat-holes than the emporiums of European goods. The door is generally thronged with carriages, and in the hot season there is some difficulty in getting up to it ; the *garreemans*, or coachmen, of Calcutta, ignorant of the etiquette practised in England, do not draw off at the approach of another vehicle with a party to set down or take up. For want of some arrangement of this kind, there are perpetual contests for mastery ; and timid people, or those who have a thin attendance of

servants to clear the way, prefer walking a few yards to disputing possession with the carriage at the door. In narrow passages, equipages are obliged to drive away to make room for each other ; but where space will permit, it seems a point of honour amongst the coachmen to cause as much confusion and hubbub as possible. Every body drives on which side the road he pleases to take, either left or right ; and, considering the vast number of carriages which assemble in the public places, it is wonderful how few accidents occur.

During the cold season, ladies may shop in Calcutta without any personal inconvenience, and many are not to be deterred by the heat from pursuing so favourite an amusement. The arrival of adventurers from France, who hire apartments for the display of their goods, is a great temptation to venture out ; these people, who are anxious to get away again with the vessel which brought them, usually undersell the regular shopkeepers, disposing of the stock remaining on hand by public outcry, a favourite method all over India. Upon some of these occasions, amazing bargains are to be had, of which the natives usually avail themselves ; boatmen and others upon the very smallest wages being enabled to make purchases, which they are certain of selling to advantage in the upper country, though at a hundred per cent. below the regular price. English captains of vessels have been known to open a warehouse on their own account, and to sell their investments by retail ; but whether the experiment answered or failed, the example has not been generally followed. The first arrivals in the

market, or those freighted with goods in demand, of course, speedily get rid of their cargo; while the remainder are frequently compelled to make great sacrifices. The pale ale, so much in request at an Indian table, is often sold at a dead loss, and may be had occasionally at Calcutta at three or four rupees a-dozen to the consumer; but it is never procurable at the same comparative rate of cheapness in the Mofussil. Should the new steam-boats, which have been sent out from England, prove successful in the navigation of the Ganges to Allahabad or Cawnpore, vast additions and improvements will take place in the shops already established at those and the intermediate stations. The reduced rate of European goods, and the more general introduction of articles of native manufacture, will enable the British residents of India to live as well upon inferior allowances, as they were accustomed to do in the days of splendid incomes and profuse expenditure. Mango, corunder, hybiscus, guava, and various other jams and jellies, when prepared without an admixture of spice, are quite equal to the finest of Hoffman's fruits. Hams and bacon can be as well cured in India as in England: and the table at least may be independent of every European article excepting wine and beer, while very excellent cider may be made from melons.

All the musical instruments used in India are importations: as yet no manufactory of the kind has been ventured upon. Very few carriages are brought from England, there being a large coach-maker's establishment of great celebrity in Calcutta, besides others in different parts of the country; some main-

tained by Europeans, and others by natives, who work from the instructions of gentlemen, especially artillery and engineer officers, possessing amateur acquaintance with the art. All sorts of harness and saddlery have attained great perfection at Cawnpore, where the natives work upon leather with much success, producing such delicate articles as white kid gloves of a very fair quality; their saddles and bridles are exceedingly neat and elegant, and if not so durable as those of English make, are infinitely cheaper. The price of a hunting-saddle and bridle imported from England is twelve pounds, while those manufactured at Cawnpore may be had for one, equally good in appearance, though they probably will not last quite so long. The great demand for leather at Cawnpore has proved very fatal to troop-horses, and those of travellers proceeding to that station. The villages, at the distance of a march or two, are inhabited by gangs of miscreants, who do not hesitate to procure so lucrative an article of commerce by the most nefarious means. It is their custom to poison the wells, or otherwise to administer some deleterious mixture to the horses encamped in their neighbourhood. They either die immediately, or drop upon the road during their next day's march, and their skins are stripped off and sold at Cawnpore. It is seldom that a native of India can be detected in his knaveries. After many vain attempts to discover the perpetrators of these enormities, gentlemen who lost their horses came to a determination to defeat the projects of the wretches by whom they had been destroyed. Upon the death of any animal, they had it flayed instantly by their

own people, and either carried away the skin or caused it to be burned upon the spot. This plan has at length proved effectual: the horse-killers, tired of their vain attempts to secure the object of their villany, allow the most tempting studs to pass unmolested, the *thanadars* in the neighbourhood having received orders to warn all travellers of the danger, and to recommend them, in the event of any casualty amongst their cattle, not to leave the skin behind. There is an exceedingly good English coach-maker settled at Cawnpore, and very excellent and elegant carriages are made at Bareilly, a place famous for the beauty of its household furniture, which is painted and lackered with much taste, and in a peculiar manner.

CHAPTER VI.

GHAZEEPORE.

THE precious incense of the rose, the *atta-gool*, so celebrated throughout all the civilized parts of the world, is produced in considerable quantities in the gardens round GhazEEPore. A paradise of roses conveys enchanting ideas of floral pomp and luxuriance to the mind. Fancy decks the scene with brilliant hues;—parterres, where idle zephyrs wanton through the day;—canopies, flinging their living tapestry of buds and interweaving leaves over banks

and beds strewed with the blossoms which the sighing breeze has scattered. Sober reality, however, dispels these gay illusions ; the cultivation of roses at Ghazee-pore is a mere matter of business ; and the extensive fields, planted with the brightest ornament of the garden, do not invest the station with the attractions which are conjured up by a poetical imagination.

The Indian rose, though its very name seems to imply distinction, can only sustain a comparison with its European sisters in the fragrance which it yields. It is beautiful, for could a rose be otherwise ? but, excepting at Agra, it does not attain to the magnificent size common in England, nor does it present the infinite varieties which adorn our gardens. The cultivators of India are content to take what the hand of nature has given them, and resort to few aids for the improvement of her lavish beauties : to a large majority, the rose appears to be too valuable a plant to be made the mere embellishment of a bouquet, and, for commercial purposes, that which they have found indigenous to the soil proves quite sufficient.

England is not the land of romance, but her hop-grounds are far more beautiful than the vine-wreathed vallies of France, or the rose-gardens which bloom in the East ; unfortunately, they are associated with breweries and ale-casks, and want the classic elegance which surrounds the bowl, brimmed with the red grape's ruby flood,—the lingering scent which clings round odours crushed, and makes them sweeter still. The rose of an English cottage, clambering from lattice to lattice, and mantling over the rustic porch in bright redundance, is infinitely more attractive

than its Indian namesake. We do not see the roses of Oriental climes spreading themselves over arches, or flinging down their crimson wealth in rich red clusters. They bloom sparingly upon a low shrub, which is kept to a dwarfish size by the gardener's knife, and the full-blown flowers being carefully gathered every morning, the trees rarely present the luxuriance of loaded boughs drooping beneath the weight of their silken treasures.

The roses of Ghazeetopre are planted formally, in large fields, occupying many hundred acres of the adjacent country. The flush of their flowers, when opening to the morning ray, and enamelling the verdant carpet of green spread over a sun-lit plain, cannot fail to delight the eye; but would afford far greater pleasure if diversified with bowers and labyrinths, trellises hung with garlands, and crimson clusters peeping between the luxuriant foliage wreathing over long arcades. If the voluptuous Moghuls ever celebrated a festival of roses in so appropriate a scene of their Indian conquests, no traces or memorials now remain to fill the spot with recollections of the Floral fête. The gathering of the flowers, either at its commencement or its close, is unaccompanied by those bright revels, which seem to be almost inseparable from a harvest of roses. No gay troops of youths and maidens pile the glowing treasures in osier baskets, or wreath them round their brows. The work is performed, systematically, by a multitude of poor labourers, who, while carefully securing every full-blown flower, think of nothing except the *pice* which will repay their easy toil.

The first process which the roses undergo is that of distillation. They are put into the alembic with nearly double their weight of water. The *goolāābee pāūnee* (rose-water) thus obtained is poured into large shallow vessels, which are exposed uncovered to the open air during the night. The *narnes*, or jars, are skimmed occasionally ; the essential oil floating on the surface being the precious concentration of *aroma*, so highly prized by the worshippers of the rose. It takes 200,000 flowers to produce the weight of a rupee in *atta*. This small quantity, when pure and unadulterated with sandal-oil, sells upon the spot at 100 rupees (£10): an enormous price, which, it is said, does not yield very large profits. A civilian, having made the experiment, found that the rent of land producing the above-named quantity of *atta*, and the purchase of utensils, alone, came to £5 ; to this sum the hire of labourers remained still to be added, to say nothing of the risk of an unproductive season.

The Damascus, or rose of Sharon, is the flower in most esteem in some parts of India ; in others, the common cabbage, or hundred-leaved rose, is the favourite. The oil produced by the above-mentioned process is not always of the same colour, being sometimes green, sometimes bright amber, and frequently of a reddish hue. When skimmed, the produce is carefully bottled, each vessel being hermetically sealed with wax ; and the bottles are then exposed to the strongest heat of the sun during several days

Young ladies in England, who spend the rosy months of June and July in the country, and who can

command a hot-house where the thermometer rises to 100° or 120°, might try the experiment of manufacturing *atta*: 200,000 roses could easily be obtained by levying contributions upon friends and neighbours; and from the rose-water they would yield, poured into China vases, and placed amongst the pine-apples, delicate hands might be employed to extract the floating essence.

Rose-water which has been skimmed is reckoned inferior to that which retains its essential oil, and is sold at Ghazeetpore at a lower price; though, according to the opinion of many persons, there is scarcely, if any, perceptible difference in the quality. A *seer* (a full quart) of the best may be obtained for eight *annas* (about 1s.). Rose-water enters into almost every part of the domestic economy of the natives of India: it is used for ablutions, in medicine, and in cookery. Before the abolition of *nuzzurs* (presents), it made a part of the offering of persons who were not rich enough to load the trays with gifts of greater value. It is poured over the hands after meals; and at the festival of the *Hoolee*, all the guests are profusely sprinkled with it. Europeans, suffering under attacks of prickly heat, find the use of rose-water a great alleviation. Natives take it internally for all sorts of complaints; they consider it to be the sovereignest thing on earth for an inward bruise, and *eau de Cologne* cannot be more popular in France than the *goolāabee pāanee* in India. Rose-water, also, when bottled, is exposed to the sun for a fortnight at least.

The environs of Ghazeetpore are exceedingly pretty, planted with fine forest trees, which may be supposed

to bear the nests of *bulbuls*, haunting the gardens of the rose; though, whether the nightingale of the East are found in this district, I cannot vouch with any degree of certainty, having only heard and seen those divine warblers in cages. Birds, however, abound: the branches are loaded with the pendulous nests of the crested sparrow, and the blue jay sports in dangerous proximity to the Ganges, being selected at a barbarous Hindoo festival as a victim to the cruel Doorga. At the annual celebration of her inhuman rites, these beautiful birds are thrown into the river; and though sometimes rescued by Europeans, who do not share in the superstition that it is unlucky to intermeddle with the vengeful goddess's offerings, they seldom survive the immersion. There are some fine old banian-trees in the neighbourhood of GhazEEPore; one, in particular, which overshadows a *ghaut* in an adjacent village, may be styled the monarch of the Ganges. This tree, as well as the peepul, is sacred; and when a Brahmin takes up his abode under its boughs, it becomes an asylum for all sorts of animals: the fine old patriarch of the woods near GhazEEPore is the haunt of innumerable monkies, which actually crowd the branches, and gambol along the steps of the *ghaut*, perch upon its balustrades, and play their antics with the bathers in perfect security, and in multitudes which remind the gazer of rabbits in a warren.

Snakes are very numerous in this part of the country, and their deadly enemy, the mongoose, is frequently seen on the watch for the victims which he pursues with unrelenting animosity. Both natives and Europeans, who have witnessed the encounters

of these extraordinary animals with venomous reptiles, are convinced that the mongoose is acquainted with an antidote to the poison, which medical men of the highest eminence have pronounced to be mortal, refusing, in many instances, to yield to the strongest repellent known (*eau de luce*), a remedy sometimes administered with success. It is certain that the mongoose frequently receives very severe bites in its conflicts with the snake ; that after being wounded it is seen to retire, as it is supposed for the purpose of applying the antidote, and that it will return again to the charge with unflinching vigour, never relinquishing the fight until it has succeeded in destroying its opponent. The mongoose is often domesticated as a pet, for the purpose of keeping houses free from snakes ; and thus amateurs have constant opportunities of witnessing its combats with the cobra de capello. Its movements are so exceedingly rapid, that no one has yet been able to follow it to the plant which yields the specific ; and scientific men have not hitherto thought it worth their while to ascertain this interesting point by a series of experiments.

Ghazeetpore is the quarter of a King's regiment of infantry, and is reckoned a very desirable station, on account of the easy nature of the duties, and the healthiness of the climate. In times of peace, upon the landing of European corps of foot soldiers, it has usually been the custom to allow them to make the tour of the provinces by slow degrees, resting, during intervals of two or three years, either at Berhampore, or Boglipore, on their way to Dinapore, Ghazeetpore, Cawnpore, and Meerut. This practice, however, has

been departed from in the case of the 26th regiment, which, almost immediately after its arrival at Fort William, was marched up to Kurnaul, a frontier station on the distant borders of the Company's territories. The Upper Provinces being considered infinitely more healthy than the low plains of Bengal, it would be advisable, if not interfering with the welfare of the service, to send King's corps into the interior at the first season in which it would be practicable to perform a long march. The process of acclimation is attended with a melancholy catalogue of deaths, when it is carried on in the damp districts near the presidency. Though Dinapore has the advantage of a dry sandy soil, cholera is no stranger to its cantonments ; and it is not until the arrival of a regiment of Europeans at Ghazee-pore, that much hope can be entertained of clean bills of health in the medical report.

King's troops are very expensive appendages to the Company's territories ; the care and attention necessary for the preservation of their lives, generally has the effect of unfitting them for the duties which a soldier is called upon to perform in a colder climate ; while, in despite of the pains taken to ensure their health and comfort, their existence in India must be far less pleasurable than a life of toil and hardship under a more genial atmosphere. During many months, European soldiers are doomed to spend their whole time in imprisonment and idleness ; their parades take place very early in the morning, and after the daily exercise is over, they must confine themselves to their barracks. They are strictly enjoined not to proceed to the bungalows of their officers upon duty, in the

heat of the sun, without an umbrella, and it is no uncommon sight to meet a private with a black attendant carrying a *chattah* (awning) over his head. The penny literature of the day would be invaluable, could it reach the stations of European soldiers in India with the regularity and cheapness of its production in England, for reading is their grand resource. Happy are those who find in the Bible every book they need! Religious exercises form the consolation and the occupation of many; but there is still a very large majority who require other aids to fill up their time. Books are, unfortunately, rather a scarce commodity, and notwithstanding the establishment of regular libraries, want of funds renders the supply inadequate to the demand.

Commanding officers have usually the good sense to encourage, or at least to sanction, intellectual amusements. In many places, the soldiers have been permitted to construct a theatre for their own performances, and at others they are allowed the use of that belonging to the station. The prices of admission are generally sufficient to cover the expenses, though in India, as well as in England, dramatic speculations are often found to be losing concerns, and scarcely any manager or managing committee can contrive to keep out of debt. Infinite pains are taken to divest theatrical amusements of the danger which might arise from love-scenes between married women and gay Lotharios. The soldiers' wives are not permitted to enact the heroines in dramatic entertainments, lest it should lead to deviations from the path of duty; and when female characters cannot be cut out, they are performed by

beardless youths, much to the deterioration of the spectacle, although the principle which deprives the Mofussil stage of feminine attraction cannot be too highly commended.

A theatre affords interesting occupation to numbers of poor exiled soldiers, who would otherwise be devoured with *ennui*. Those who can handle a brush are employed in painting the scenes; less accomplished amateurs are too happy to be allowed to shift them; and the orchestra is open to musical aspirants, the Orphii of the Mofussil, who, maugre the disadvantages of instruments which will not keep a single instant in tune, beguile many weary hours with the practice necessary for a grand display. Petting animals also offers a pleasing source of employment to a soldier; great varieties of parrots, highly accomplished in the vulgar tongue, are to be found in the barracks, and the master frequently becomes too much attached to a docile and apt scholar to part with it, though tempted by a high price: twenty rupees (£2) being usually given for a well-taught bird. Constant attention and untiring patience are necessary for the instruction of the feathered race; and as the organ of speech is much more strongly developed in the skulls of some paroquets than in those of others, an acquaintance with phrenology would save an infinity of labour. The parrot's cage is hung in some dark place, not unfrequently down a well, while the tutor, lying on the brink, repeats the same sentence over and over again for an hour together. The education of parrots on the continent of India is almost wholly confined to Europeans; though they are frequently kept in a state

of captivity by the natives, and are objects of veneration to some castes of Hindoos, they are rarely if ever taught to speak by them. All their cares appear to be lavished upon the hill mynahs, beautiful large black birds with a yellow mark on each side of the head, which are easily trained to the performance of a variety of amusing tricks, and turn out far better orators than the paroquets.

That pining after home, which, in hearts endued with sensibility, too often sows the seeds of disease and death, is acutely felt by a large portion of the King's soldiers, whose terms of service in India being seldom less than twenty years, nearly amounts to a sentence of perpetual banishment. Excepting during a war, when hardships, however severe, are rendered endurable by the spirit-stirring incidents attendant on a hot campaign,—destitute of all excitement, bold and hardy men drag out a life of inglorious ease, in a completely artificial state of existence, preserved, as it were, in glass cases for times of need. Their society at all periods is exclusively military; they have no communication, as at home, with their fellow-citizens; no jovial meetings with strange faces in public-houses; no large assemblages of persons belonging to their own class at fair, and festivals. Their wants are carefully attended to, but their enjoyments are few; beer is a luxury which their purses can rarely command; they have not many opportunities of forming matrimonial connexions with people of their own colour, and life must be irksome to all who cannot give themselves up to sedentary employments. Long habit lends its aid to the subduing influence of the

climate to reconcile the greater number of European soldiers to this state of vegetation ; they are conscious that a protracted residence in India has rendered them unequal to the performance of military duties elsewhere ; and when, at length, a regiment receives orders to embark for England, numerous volunteers are found willing to remain in the country in which they have worn out the fairest portion of their existence. The ties which bound them to their native land have all been severed ; the fond hopes which they cherished of an early return, laden with the spoils of conquered rajahs, have melted away, and they are content at last to relinquish the fair visions of home and happiness, for the solid provision which can be attained in India. These are usually steady men, of sober views and habits, who have outlived the illusions of their youth, and are satisfied to have a choice of minor evils. Warmer temperaments indulge more vivid expectations ; to them the name of *home* acts like a spell ; painful experience has not yet taught them to anticipate disappointment, and they return with the same bright hopes which led them gladly to seek a land whose splendid promises remain unfulfilled. A few, driven to despair by the melancholy prospect of interminable exile, unable to await the slow approach of their recall, and allured by the flowery descriptions of Australia, plunge into crime for the purpose of exchanging honourable servitude in India for a felon's lot in a climate resembling that of England. It is no very unusual circumstance for a soldier to attempt the life of his officer or his comrade, in the hope of being transported to a country possessing so many features

akin to the land of his birth ; and even the punishment of death is to some less terrible than the prospect of eternal banishment from “the home they left with little pain.”

In no other country in the world can the wives and children of European soldiers enjoy the comfort and happiness which await them in India. The lot of the latter is peculiarly fortunate, for they have no reminiscences of another land to poison the blessings of competence and freedom from the pressure of early cares ; schools are established in every regiment for the instruction of children of both sexes. The education of persons belonging to their class in society, can be carried on as well in India as in England : they are taught to make themselves useful ; the boys with a view of becoming non-commissioned officers, regimental clerks, &c. ; the girls to be made industrious servants, and fitting wives for men in a rank rather superior to that from which they themselves have sprung. The clergy take great delight in the instruction of the youthful members of their respective flocks, and they form the most numerous and the most interesting candidates for confirmation at the visits of the Bishop of Calcutta to the distant scenes of his vast diocese. European ladies gladly take the females into service at an early age, and if they do not retain their situations long, it is because they are eagerly sought in marriage by their fathers' comrades, or by shopkeepers who chance to be located in their vicinity. The daughters of dragoon soldiers sometimes aspire to be belles ; they copy the fashions brought out by new arrivals of a higher class, and do great execution at the balls, which

upon grand occasions are given by the *élite* of the non-commissioned officers of the corps.

The wives of soldiers in India are secured from all those laborious toils and continual hardships to which they must submit in countries where the pay of their husbands is inadequate to their support. If sober and industrious, they may easily accumulate a little hoard for the comfort of their declining years. Acquaintance with any useful art, dress-making, feather-cleaning, lace-mending, washing silk stockings, or the like, may be converted into very lucrative employments; and the enormous wages demanded by European women, when they go into service as ladies'-maids, or wet-nurses (from fifty to a hundred rupees per month), shews how indifferent they are to the means of acquiring money by personal exertion. Few officers' wives attached to King's corps can afford to have a white female attendant; and the unaccustomed luxuries which these women enjoy, when domesticated in wealthy families, unfortunately, in too many instances, are apt to render them so lazy, insolent, and over-bearing, as to be perfectly intolerable; and consequently it is not often that they are to be found out of the barracks.

Soldiers are not in England very scrupulous in the choice of their wives, and amid the numbers who come out to India, a very small portion remain uncorrupted by bad example and the deteriorating influence of campaigns and long voyages. It is not absolutely necessary that they should undertake any thing beyond the care of their own family, and many prefer idleness to the slightest exertion. They and their children

have regular rations served out for their daily food; while the regiment is upon a march, they are provided with suitable conveyances; during the hot winds, their quarters are supplied with *tatties*; and in passing along the lines *punkahs* may be seen swinging in the serjeants' barrack-rooms, and curious scenes are displayed to view through the open doors. Some fat and unshapeable lady, attired in a loose white gown, indulging in a siesta in an elbow-chair, with a native attendant, ragged and in wretched case, who, fan in hand, agitates the air around her.

To those Anglo-Indians who cherish vivid recollections of home, and who delight in all things which recall their native country to their mind, it is exceedingly gratifying to be stationed in the vicinity of a King's regiment or a European corps in the service of the Company. After a long absence from England, and long association with persons of education, the homely provincial accents of some untaught soldier come in music on the ear, bringing with them a rush of painfully-pleasing emotions; recalling past scenes and past days, "awakening thoughts which long have slept," restoring youth, hope, health, and happiness, for a brief delightful period. Experience alone can tell how sad, and yet how dear, are the first meetings with country people of an inferior class in the jungles of India. A detachment of artillery, passing through a small outpost, whose European inhabitants did not exceed a dozen persons, occasioned a burst of anguish, which revealed to a pining exile the full extent of that home-sickness which had preyed in secret on her mind. Returning from an evening walk, a soldier's wife crossed the path, and at first, rejoicing to meet a

countrywoman, the lady eagerly stepped forward and accosted her ; but no sooner did the familiar sounds of by-gone days strike upon her heart, than she burst into a flood of tears. Aware that the person who had caused this violent emotion would be quite unconscious of the effect which her homely speech had produced, she stifled her feelings, and, inviting the poor woman to come to the bungalow, hastened onward to order out the contents of the larder to form a little feast for her comrades in the camp ; but she dared not trust herself beyond a few simple questions, and, unwilling to make a display of sensibility which might be misconstrued, and could not be understood, she did not indulge in the pensive gratification which a protracted interview would have afforded. When accustomed to see and converse with the lower order of Europeans, the keenness of the emotions produced by the reminiscences which they call up, subsides, and the feelings they create are wholly of a pleasurable nature. The evening drive is rendered doubly gratifying by the groups of healthy-looking, tidily-dressed English children, at play in front of their quarters, or bending their way in the train of their parents along the road, upon a Sunday evening, to the church, whose tinkling bell charms the ear as in days of old, when the peal from a village spire filled the heart to overflowing with delightful sensations.

Though destitute of the rich red roses, which bloom so freshly on the cheeks of youthful cottagers in England, the sickliness and delicacy, so strikingly apparent in the petted and carefully-attended offspring of the higher order, are rarely the characteristic of soldiers' children, who seem to preserve their strength

and vigour in a climate considered to be exceedingly detrimental to the juvenile classes of Europeans. The mortality amongst the infants of this grade is not so great as might be expected: where the mothers have been unable to suckle them, and where the expense of a native nurse could not be incurred, a goat has performed the maternal office with infinite success, the little creatures thriving under the nourishment afforded by this humble animal; nor is it so usual to droop and pine away at the period in which change of climate is so earnestly recommended to the children of the rich; numbers of fine young men and women grow up to maturity without having tasted a colder air than that which blows in Hindostan.

The station-duties are performed at Ghazeetpore by two or three companies of a native regiment, detached from Benares, sepoy standing sentinel at the hospital, store-houses, and at all places where the heat is considered to be injurious to European constitutions. There are a few staff-appointments held by officers of the Company's service, and the society receives a very agreeable addition from the families of several indigo-planters residing in the neighbourhood.

It is always a fortunate circumstance when the higher class of Anglo-Indian cultivators are settled in the vicinity of an European cantonment, since there are no set of persons who exercise more boundless hospitality, or from whom travellers receive more cordial kindness. Those with whom it would not be desirable to associate form a very small portion. The greater number of the country-born, or Eurasians, many of whom shew complexions still darker than

that of the natives, are, generally speaking, intelligent, well-informed men, ever ready to contribute to any proposed amusement, and opening their doors readily at all times for the reception of guests; while those Europeans who have embarked in indigo speculations are usually of a very high order of intellect.

Although no rank is recognised in India, excepting that which is held by the civil and military servants of the Company, much to the credit of the society, there are no invidious distinctions made between the persons who compose it. Individuals who are gifted with pleasing manners and accomplishments will always receive the respect and attention due to their merits; little or no regard is paid to colour or to circumstances, where there are personal claims to the notice of those more highly endowed with the gifts of birth and fortune. Fine houses, fine equipages, and fine entertainments, though they may render individuals popular who have little else to recommend them, are not, as in England, essentially requisite to obtain a passport into good society. It is sufficient that the party shall have the *entrée* of Government-house, the grand test of gentility in India; but even ineligibility in this particular does not, amid liberal-minded people, form an insurmountable barrier; many families, both in the Mofussil and in Calcutta, being received in society, whose occupation and calling must exclude them from the vice-regal court.

The India Company have a stud for the breed of horses in the vicinity of Ghazee-pore, under the superintendence of European officers peculiarly qualified

for the appointment. The cattle which they turn out, though inferior in beauty to English and Arab chargers, are extremely useful, particularly for harness; a stud-bred horse with a good pedigree is a valuable animal, and always obtains a fair price, though considerably lower than that which would be demanded for a horse of equal merit in England. The common country breed, though it is said that they possess more blood than any other horses in the world, are so unseemly in their appearance, and so unconquerably vicious in their habits, that they are rarely used except upon some great emergence, by European officers. There are, however, some very handsome animals brought from distant parts of India, and others, especially those from Cutch, which are more curious than beautiful, but which prove hard-working useful roadsters, better fitted for the climate than those of English parentage, which are very soon knocked up, and are consequently taken the utmost care of.

From Calcutta to Barrackpore, a distance of sixteen miles, carriage-horses are always changed midway; and as none are kept for posting, a pair must be sent on the day before. Medical men, or those who spend a good deal of their time in visiting, cannot take out the same horses in the evening which they have used in the morning; and it is one of the objections to Cawnpore, that officers who have only one buggy-horse, are unable to take their wives to the Course in the evening, because it has been driven a long distance during the day to some court-martial or committee sitting at the extremity of the cantonments, which straggle along a space of five miles in length. Not-

withstanding the care and attention paid to horses in India, the luxury of a stable is often of necessity denied them. When out in the field, or during long marches, they are picqueted under trees, the only covering which they or their *syces* have to protect them from the inclemency of the weather being a blanket; unless the grooms are liberally supplied with horse-cloths, they are too apt to make themselves comfortable at the expense of their charge; and it is therefore the best economy to provide sufficient clothing for man and horse.

An Indian *syce* is generally exceedingly attached to the animal under his care; it is no uncommon circumstance for gentlemen travelling by a different route to entrust their most valuable charges to the sole guardianship of their grooms, who proceed alone, through jungley districts, seldom if ever mounting the animals, which are led by their conductors, and which arrive at the place of their destination at the end of two or three months, according to the distance, in excellent condition. Sometimes the *syce* is taken ill upon the road, in which event he will drag himself with difficulty to the next European station, and deliver up the horse to the care of some English gentleman, who, if the poor man's case should be desperate, will hire a new groom, and send him on with his charge, well assured that he will perform the duties of the service with fidelity and despatch. Instances of horses being lost or injured upon long journies of this nature, if known, are so exceedingly rare, that they cannot be adduced in prejudice of the national character, which, in the faithful discharge

of the trust reposed in the humblest individuals, is unrivalled. Sepoys despatched upon treasure-parties, if surprised and outnumbered by bands of armed robbers, will make a desperate though hopeless resistance, and suffer themselves to be cut to pieces to a man rather than desert their posts, although retreat under the circumstances could not be considered dishonourable.

There is scarcely a servant in any establishment who could not, if he pleased, make himself master of what would be wealth to him ; for there are very few things which are not left open and at the mercy of the domestics, who have many facilities for escape beyond the reach of justice : but it is seldom that the poorest and lowest abuse their employer's confidence ; nothing but ill-treatment, and, in many cases, not even that, will induced a servant to rob his master ; frequently the whole household will abscond in the night, but they do not often carry any thing away with them, though there may be arrears of wages due, which they dare not return to claim. Yet, notwithstanding facts of this nature, which are notorious, and the unlimited confidence which the greater number of Europeans repose in their servants, no set of persons are more calumniated or reviled. There are certain perquisites to which they think themselves entitled, and which, if they are not very sharply looked after, they will appropriate ; but, excepting where great carelessness and extravagance on the part of the heads of houses encourage similar waste in their inferiors, their peculations are very trifling, and by no means deserve to be designated by the opprobrious terms which people, unaccustomed to the tricks and frauds practised by

European domestics, are wont to use in descanting upon the knaveries of those of India. Were the same power to be placed in the humble classes of England, it would be much more frequently abused ; but persons who have come out young and inexperienced to India, and who, in too many instances, entertain a prejudice against the colour of those with whom they are surrounded, are apt to fancy excellences and perfections in servants at home, which only exist in their own imaginations : a truth of which, upon their return to Europe, they are soon painfully convinced.

Meritorious examples of honesty are of perpetual occurrence in India ; large sums of money, accidentally left upon tables, have been carefully secured by the first servant who espied them, and produced without any ostentation, as a matter of course, at the owner's return. The sirdar-bearer has usually the care of his master's purse, and when these men are judiciously selected, they may be entrusted with untold gold. The poorest class of labourers, *coolies*, are often employed to convey a box or parcel, containing valuable property, from Calcutta to the Upper Provinces, receiving an advance of pay at the period of their setting out, as they have no means of maintaining themselves upon the road ; fifteen or twenty rupees, if the journey be a long one, are often given for this purpose, and always without the slightest danger of the sum being misapplied. Nothing could be more easy than the appropriation of box and money to the use of the person who carries his load over many weary miles for scanty pay, and who, by diverging

into a neighbouring district, might defy the pursuit of justice ; but such things never occur ; the only danger to be apprehended is the murder of the *coolie*, by those prowling bands of robbers by profession which infest every part of Hindostan.

Ghazepore is notorious for its thieves, many of whom pursue their vocation under a religious character, and in the garb of *gosseins* (devout beggars) inveigle their victims to their pagodas, where they assassinate them at leisure. Dacoits of a less atrocious description abound, and no travellers can escape their depredations, unless they consent to entertain one or two *chokeydars* during their halt, a set of gentry who act a double part, and are thieves when they are not watchmen. The vigilance and zeal of these guardians of the night are manifested by loud and incessant cries of *khaubba daur !* ‘Take care!’ When they do not sleep themselves, they seem determined not to allow any persons to close their eyes who happen to be within hearing. Every quarter of an hour the warning is repeated, with a strength of lungs which effectually precludes the hope that the Stentorian voice may fail, and quiet be restored.

The native city of Ghazepore is better built and better kept than many other places of more importance. The bazaars are neat, well-supplied, and famous for their tailors, whose excellent workmanship is celebrated in the adjacent districts. A very considerable number of the inhabitants are Moosulmans, though the neighbouring population is chiefly Hindoo ; their mosques are numerous and handsome, and their former grandeur is evinced by a superb palace built

by the Nawāb Cossim Ali Khan, which occupies a considerable extent of ground overlooking the Ganges. This noble building is now in a melancholy state of dilapidation, neglected by the Government, who have turned it into a custom-house, and have converted many of its suites of apartments into warehouses, and the residences of police *peons* belonging to the guard. Though thus rendered useful, it is not thought worthy of repair ; its splendid banqueting-hall and cool verandahs, replete with architectural beauty, abutting into the river, are deserted and left to the swift devastations of the climate. In a very short period the whole of this magnificent fabric will become a heap of ruins, and then some mean and tasteless edifice will be erected in its place. The great dislike which Europeans entertain to a residence within the precincts of a native city, has probably prevented the civilians attached to Ghazeepore from selecting this palace for their abode. It might, however, be rendered subservient to some public purpose, and could be put into repair at a small expense by men zealously desirous to preserve so interesting a relic, as the workmen would be furnished from the neighbouring prison.

The place of confinement for felons of all descriptions at Ghazeepore is large, strong, airy, and commodious, and usually crowded with delinquents of all castes and denominations: refractory Moosulmans, incarcerated for various offences, and fanatical Hindoos, whose crimes are in most instances connected with their religion. Not content with starving themselves to death, in order to revenge themselves upon their adversaries in another world, they are sometimes

known to murder a member of their own family, in the belief that the blood of the victim will rest upon the heads of their adversaries. A memorable illustration of this notion occurred at Ghazeetpore, where an old man, who conceived that he had a right to a piece of land which had been adjudged to his neighbour, brought his wife to the spot, an elderly personage, who could be easily spared, and forcing her, with the assistance of his friends and relations, into a hut made of straw, set it on fire, and burned her to death, in the expectation that the soil would be accursed, and refuse to yield its fruits to the enemy who had triumphed over him.

The punishment of death is not often adjudged by the criminal courts to the natives of India. The law by which they are tried renders it very difficult to prove murders, however openly committed; and the usual sentence is hard labour upon the roads during a certain number of years, or for life, according to the enormity of the crime. The convicts work in irons, and are sometimes employed in weeding the paths round the houses of people of distinction.

A stranger, seated in a drawing-room of an officer of very high rank, was much amazed by the '*qui hi? punkah tannah!*' ('who waits? pull the *punkah*,') being answered by a felon, fettered and manacled, who, with the utmost coolness, squatted down upon the floor, applied himself to the rope, and pulled away vigorously, his chains clanking in harmony all the time. Such an exhibition did not seem to strike the family as any thing extraordinary; they appeared to think that, provided the *punkah* was set in motion,

the character and condition of the operator were of very little consequence ; a proof, amongst many others, of the utter disregard of consistency manifested in an Anglo-Indian establishment.

In visiting persons of consequence in the Mofussil, travellers in their *griffinage* are exceedingly astonished by the appearance of the verandahs leading to apartments furnished with costliness and taste, they being generally made to resemble old clothes' shops or pawn-brokers' stalls ; servants and sepoy's of the guard are usually permitted to hang up their garments upon the pillars and bamboos, and to spread their beds under the awning. More attention is paid to appearances in Calcutta ; but the basement story of many of the houses frequently exhibits symptoms of carelessness and neglect, choked up with unseemly articles, which native servants never deem to be out of place in the most conspicuous situations.

The houses of the civilians attached to Ghazee-pore are spacious and well-built, surrounded by good gardens, and occupying picturesque situations, amid tame but luxuriant scenery ; where the green lanes, flowering hedge-rows, and receding glades bring the most cultivated portions of England to mind. The bungalows of the military residents are frightful ; the huge thatched roofs, common to such edifices, being exchanged for still more ugly tiles of glaring red. They are fortunately well sheltered, and somewhat concealed by intervening trees, and the interiors are commodious, though overrun with rats and mice, which few of the European residents are at the trouble to destroy, notwithstanding the dirt they engender, and the havoc

which they commit in wardrobes, larders, and furniture. It is not difficult to exterminate this sort of vermin ; but Indian servants, if not enjoined to keep the houses clean, will allow them to swarm in every apartment, and habit reconciles many persons to the intrusion. Those who entertain a disgust to such unclean animals, are most cruelly annoyed by the multitudes which approach them whenever they pay their visits to friends.

The races of Ghazeetpore are some of the best in India, and attract sporting characters from all the adjacent provinces ; the horses are superior to those started for mere amusement by less ambitious members of the turf at other stations, and are frequently the subject of heavy bets. Commodious stables have been erected, which are occupied by the favourites, and the result of each meeting excites very general interest all over the country. The annual fair at Hadjeetpore, held at an inconsiderable distance, and the occasional visits of families from Mirzapore, Chunar, Buxar, Sultanpore, and Benares, places situated within an easy journey, render Ghazeetpore a very lively residence. The military cantonments are honoured by retaining the mortal remains of a soldier, eminent for the conquest of some of the fairest portions of the Honourable Company's territories,—the great Cornwallis,—who, after his glorious exploits upon the other side of India, died during a journey from the Upper Provinces, and is buried near the parade-ground of Ghazeetpore. The mausoleum which has been raised over his dust, is little worthy of the magnificent spirit which sleeps beneath ; and shews to great disadvantage after a visit

to the Moosulman tombs so profusely scattered over the neighbouring plains. The architects disdained to take a hint from the chaste and beautiful specimens of monumental remains which the country affords, and have erected a non-descript building, at a great expense, after a model of the far-famed sybil's temple ; but deformed by mean pillars and a cumbrous attic story, disproportioned to its support. It is built of excellent materials, free-stone, which promises great durability ; and the dome, which, though it has been compared to the cover of a pepper-pot, is the best part of it, makes a good appearance from the river and will look still better when shadowed by the trees which are planted in the back-ground. The mausoleum forms a point of attraction to the station ; the military band, always an appendage to a king's regiment, plays near it of an evening, and the whole population of the different lines come forth in carriages, on horseback, or on foot, to enjoy the fresh cool breezes and the society of their acquaintance. A few European shopkeepers are settled at GhazEEPore, which is well supplied with foreign and native products ; the sugar-cane is extensively cultivated in the district, but its manufacture is not so celebrated as at Kalpee on the Jumna, where the natives produce immense quantities of the finest descriptions. The best kind of sugar in India is crystallized, and sold in the shape of baskets, somewhat resembling those made of alum, which are constructed by ingenious young ladies in England. These have a pretty appearance when placed upon a tray, and always form a portion of the presents composed of dried fruits and sweetmeats.

CHAPTER VII.

GOVERNMENT-HOUSE, CALCUTTA.

BISHOP HEBER, in speaking of the vice-regal palace of Calcutta, says, that it has narrowly missed being a noble structure ; persons of less refined, or, as some would call it, less fastidious taste, do not concur in this censure, or admit that the architectural blunders, of which the critic complains, have had an injurious effect upon the appearance of the building. It is altogether, whatever may be the fault of its details, a splendid pile ; and, standing isolated on the Calcutta side of the large open plain, which forms so magnificent a quadrangle opposite Chowringee, it is seen to the greatest advantage from every point, being sufficiently connected with the city to shew that it belongs to it, yet unencumbered and not shut out by any of the adjacent buildings. It consists of two semicircular galleries, placed back to back, uniting in the centre in a large hall, and connecting four splendid suites of apartments. " Its columns, however," observes the Bishop, " are in a paltry style ; and instead of having, as it might have had, two noble stories and a basement, it has three stories, all too low, and is too much pierced with windows on every side."

Somewhat of effect was probably sacrificed to convenience and the accommodation necessary for the establishment of the Governor-general ; but the great

objection to it as an Asiatic residence, which does not appear to have struck the elegant and accurate commentator, is the want of colonnades and porticos. The principal entrances are approached by noble flights of steps ; but these, being without shelter, are never used except upon state occasions, when a native durbar is held, and the nobles of Hindostan come in all their barbaric pomp to pay their respects at the vice-regal court ; a circumstance of rare occurrence in the present day. The carriages of the European visitants drive under these steps, and the company enter through the lower regions.

The effect upon a stranger, who has not been previously made acquainted with the cause of the arrangement, is very singular. It is scarcely possible for a lively imagination to escape the notion that, instead of being the guest of a palace, he is on the point of being conducted to some hideous dungeon as a prisoner of state. The hall which opens upon the dark cloister formed by the arch of the steps above, is large, low, and dimly lighted, completely realizing the *beau idéal* of the interior of the Inquisition. A good deal of rubbish of various kinds, piled confusedly and put out of the way behind rows of pillars, traversing the length of the hall, favours the supposition that it is a place of punishment ; for in their shapeless obscurity, these fire-engines, or printing-presses, or whatever they may be, have very much the appearance of instruments of torture.

Upon the floor, the spectator, who has imbibed the apprehension that he has been entrapped into some pandemonium of horror, may see the dead bodies of the victims to a tyrannical government thickly strewn

around :—human forms apparently wrapped in winding-sheets, and stretched out without sense or motion upon the bare pavement, add to the ghastly effect of the scene. These are the palanquin-bearers, who, wrapped up from head to foot in long coarse cloths, are enjoying the sweets of repose, little dreaming of the appalling spectacle they present to unaccustomed eyes. Many dusky figures move about with noiseless tread ; and, were it not for one redeeming circumstance, the whole panorama would be calculated to inspire horror and alarm. In the midst of these dreary catacombs, gay parties of visitors, ladies in ball-dresses, and gentlemen in full uniform, are passing along, not in the least discomposed by appearances so familiar to them, even when there is the additional *agrément* of a fog, which in the cold season usually casts a mystic veil over these subterraneous apartments.

Emerging from the damp, darkness, and corpse-like figures of the sleepers, an illuminated vestibule leads to a staircase, handsome in itself, but not exactly correspondent with the size of the building and the halls of state to which it is the approach. It is not until the visitant has gained the altitude of the hall, that the eye is greeted by any portion of the pomp and grandeur associated with our ideas of a court. Guards are now stationed at intervals ; those which were formerly attached to the Governor-general were a splendid and picturesque set of men, clad in strange and striking costume ; warlike as became a military power, and particularly ornamental as the appendages of state. The spirit of retrenchment, which has lately descended to petty savings, unworthy of the masters

of so magnificent a territory, has removed and abolished this appropriate guard of honour ; and the natives, already astonished and disappointed by the contrast afforded by the simplicity and plainness of their European rulers, with the pomp and pageantry of oriental courts, viewed this last innovation with disapprobation and regret. As the visitor ascends, the turbaned domestics of the household become more numerous ; long corridors, leading to the wings, matted and lighted, present noble ideas of the extent and grandeur of the building ; and at every landing-place the necessary pause for breath is spent in admiration of the contrivance of the architect to ensure a circulation of air, which comes so freely through the connecting galleries.

The suites of apartments devoted to large evening-parties occupy the third story. The ball-room, or throne-room, as it is called, is approached through a splendid antechamber ; both are floored with dark polished wood, and supported by Ionic pillars, leaving a wide space in the centre, with an aisle on either side ; handsome sofas of blue satin damask are placed between the pillars, and floods of light are shed through the whole range from a profusion of cut-glass chandeliers and lustres. Formerly, the ceilings were painted, but the little reverence shewn by the white ants to works of arts, obliged them to be removed, and gilt mouldings are now the only ornaments. The throne, never particularly superb, is now getting shabby ; a canopy of crimson damask, surmounted by a crown, and supported upon gilt pillars, is raised over a seat of crimson and gold ; in front, there is a

row of gilded chairs, and it is the etiquette for the viceroy and the vice-queen, upon occasions of state, to stand before the throne to receive the presentations. There is, however, nothing like a drawing-room held at this court; no lord chamberlain, or noblemen in waiting, or any functionaries corresponding with these personages, except the aides-de-camp, who are seldom very efficient, being more intent upon amusing themselves than anxious to do the honours to the company. In these degenerate days, so little state is kept up, that, after the first half-hour, the representatives of sovereignty quit their dignified post, and mingle with the assembled crowd.

There is no court-dress, or scarcely anything to distinguish the public nights at Government-house from a private party. Excepting that until lately, no gentleman was permitted to appear in a white jacket. An attempt was made by Lady Hastings to establish a more rigid system of etiquette; she had her chamberlain, and her train was held up by pages. An intimation was given to the ladies that it was expected they would appear in court plumes, and many were prevented from attending in consequence of the dearth of ostrich feathers, the whole of the supply being speedily bought up; and as it was not considered allowable to substitute native products, there was no alternative but to remain at home. The extreme horror which European ladies entertained of appearing to imitate the natives, banished gold and silver from their robes: not contented with the difference in the fashion of their garments, they refused to wear any articles of Indian manufacture, careless of the

mean effect produced by this fastidiousness. Few had been accustomed to European courts ; and having once established rules and regulations of their own, they stoutly resisted all attempts at alteration and innovation, every arrival being obliged to submit to the customs of the colony. The great influx of strangers at Calcutta has effected some change in the system ; visitors are not now so much under the control of the leading people ; they appear in whatever may be the fashion in England ; and instead of, as heretofore, being obliged to rip off the silver trimmings from their dresses, or discard them altogether, to avoid the appellation of *nautch girls*, they are allowed to sparkle and glitter without provoking many invidious remarks.

Where shall I walk at Government-house ? formed an interrogatory to which, a few years ago, the suitors who could not give a satisfactory answer had little chance of success. The inquiry now is seldom made ; the reply having lost much of its importance. At the state-dinners ladies sit according to their rank, and they are as nearly paired with male attendants of equal pretensions as circumstances will admit ; but at balls and suppers, after the Governor-general has led the wife of the greatest personage to table, the rest of the party follow in an indiscriminate manner. It is not, however, very long since the struggle for precedence was carried on with a spirit and perseverance worthy of colonial warfare ; two or three questions were sent home for final adjustment, and the wives of civilians, high in office, were much mortified to find that they were not entitled to take place of the

daughters of English peers, even though they should have married ensigns. It was decided that Lady Mary or the Honourable Mrs. had a right to precedence, whatever their husbands' military rank might be; and still worse, that the younger brothers of noble families could exalt their wives above the other ladies, though in their military or civil capacity they themselves must give place to their superiors in office. The humble titles assumed by the servants of the Honourable Company of Merchants trading to the East-Indies, of senior and junior merchants, factors, and writers, were much at variance with their notions concerning their dignity, and the precedence they considered themselves to be entitled to take of the ancient nobility of England, and general officers holding the King's or the Company's commissions; but the narrow notions engendered by the pride of office are not so prevalent as heretofore; the magnates of the colony are not quite so important in their own eyes, or in the estimation of those beneath them, and too much ridicule is now attached to squabbles about a seat at table, to render the discussion of such topics very general.

Government-house is the only place in which the guests are not allowed to introduce their own attendants; the servants of the establishment are numerous, and perfectly equal to the duties required. They are handsomely clothed in livery according to the Hindoostanee fashion; wearing in the hot weather, white muslin vests and trowsers, with *cummerbunds* or sashes, twisted with scarlet or some other colour, and the crest in silver in their turbans. In the cold weather, the

vest is of cloth of the livery colour. They are all fine-looking men, and the uniformity of their appearance gives them a great advantage over the promiscuous multitude usually in attendance at large parties; though the absence of the personal domestic is considered, by many, a heavy grievance, and more especially by those who are deprived by the existing regulations of the indulgence of the hookah.

There is no established rule respecting the entertainments at Government-house; no service of plate, or decorations for the table belonging to the establishment. The grandeur of the banquets depends entirely upon the taste and liberality of the person who holds the appointment of Governor-general for the time being; and it is whispered that there are not always a sufficient quantity of silver forks for all the guests, and that the side-tables are sometimes supplied with a manufacture of steel of no very tempting appearance. An ornamental supper, as far as the viands are concerned, is still a desideratum in Calcutta—Government-house being very little in advance of less distinguished mansions; and perhaps the only superiority it can boast, consists in such refinement as excludes large heavy joints, and substitutes a loin for a saddle of mutton. The small, delicate, gem-like, tempting dishes, which glitter on a supper-table in London, have no counterparts in the City of Palaces; every thing there is solid, substantial, and undisguised, a state of things entirely attributable to the prejudices of European society, since the genius of cookery possessed by the natives only requires to be drawn into action. A very small quantity of instruction would suffice to render them unrivalled in

every confectionary and culinary art ; and there cannot be the slightest reason for the inelegance which characterizes a Calcutta banquet, except the real or affected horror which is entertained of black cooks.

The parties at Government-house, for the reasons before assigned, do not derive the brilliancy which might be expected from the dresses of the ladies ; the effect, at least, when compared to that of European ball-rooms, is disappointing ; there is a want of freshness and lustre about the attire, which is very striking to a stranger's eye ; nor can there be so much fancy and variety exhibited in the form and ornaments, in a place where fashions and milliners are few, as in those more favoured capitals, where the success of multitudes of artists and tradespeople depends upon the taste and invention they display. Of course, there are numerous exceptions—many individual toilettes which may be pronounced perfect ; but these are lost or obscured in the cloudiness which prevails, and always will prevail, so long as the female residents of India prefer the faded manufactures of Europe to the gorgeous fabrics of oriental looms. At fancy-balls, where the products of the country are rendered available, the difference of the effect is astonishing ; instead of being confined within the narrow limits prescribed by the last bulletins from London or Paris, fancy and talent have free scope ; and in no assemblage of the kind could more magnificent groups be found than those which have made their appearance at Government-house. Military uniforms, in some degree, make up for the sombreness of female attire upon more ordinary occasions ; and the effect of a well-filled

ball-room is much heightened when the company is not exclusively composed of Europeans. The dress of the Armenian ladies is picturesque and striking, though the peculiarity is chiefly confined to the head; they wear a glittering tiara of a very singular and classic form across the forehead, with a veil suspended from the top, and hanging down in graceful folds on either side. It is not, however, very often that these ladies are seen in the public assemblies of Calcutta, in which, until very lately, it has not been thought either advisable or agreeable to encourage a promiscuous assemblage of different classes and communities. Without wishing to impugn the motives upon which the former rulers of India have acted, it is impossible not to admit that a more liberal system is better suited to the present time. Doubtless the innovations which have taken and are still taking place, will be very unpalatable to those who remember the extraordinary dignity attached to official situations and white faces in former days; but those who entertain more enlarged views, will rejoice that some of the barriers which have divided persons of different persuasions and different complexions from each other, have been broken down, and are disappearing. Bishop Heber, whose kindness of heart and liberality of mind have justly endeared him to the Indian world, was the first to shew an example to the intolerant and exclusive patricians of Calcutta, by opening his doors to respectable persons of all sects and countries. At his house, Christians of the Roman Catholic, Greek, and Protestant churches met, together with Hindoos, Moslems, Jews, and Parsees: he recommended the

religion which he preached by the practice of the widest philanthropy ; and, had he been spared, the popularity of his manners, and the well-known benevolence of his disposition, would have done much towards the removal of prejudices, which have for so long a period prevented a free and social communication between Europeans and Asiatics.

A few native gentlemen, who have either adopted English customs, or are so well acquainted with them as not to be guilty of any misapprehension or mistake, have for many years mingled freely in the fashionable circles of Calcutta, making their appearance at private parties, and joining in the subscriptions for public amusements ; they were distinguished in large assemblies for the elegance of their costume, and the splendour of their diamonds ; and persons who did not enter into the narrow notions which were but too prevalent, regretted that a much larger proportion of the same class should not have been encouraged to follow their example. Latterly, invitations to Government-house have been very widely extended amongst the natives of rank ; and the introduction of men, ignorant of the rules and regulations of European society, has given offence, and occasioned disgust to those who do not consider the measure to be expedient, or who refuse to make allowance for early notions and rooted opinions, which nothing but more intimate association can dissipate. Asiatics, at present, are not aware of the restrictions imposed in Europe by etiquette and good-breeding on the intercourse between ladies and gentlemen ; they see them converse together, dance together, and walk

arm in arm together, and, when admitted to the same degree of familiarity, they are apt to make very ridiculous trespasses. Without the slightest intentional rudeness, a native gave great offence by seating himself on the arm of a lady's chair ; and not knowing the precise limits which propriety has marked out, they do not always offer the deferential respect which women expect, and which, rather inconsiderately, they exact more strictly from foreigners than from their own countrymen, who, being better acquainted with the rules and observances, are less excusable in their breach or omission. At this day, the degree of decorum necessary to be adopted in the presence of French ladies, is so little understood by John Bull, that he is continually offering insult and annoyance, by exceeding a latitude in conversation which he has erroneously supposed to have no bounds. It is thus that Asiatics offend, and constant intercourse can alone render them acquainted with the terms upon which gentlemen mix in respectable female society. It is certainly not very agreeable to be obliged to give the lesson ; but the consequences are too important to be neglected, especially at a period in which there are such strong manifestations of the abandonment of prejudices hitherto supposed to be insurmountable.

In the native papers, published in Calcutta, the advantages and disadvantages of extending the indulgences enjoyed by European women to Asiatics are freely discussed ; there seems to be no question about the expediency of improving the mind, and giving a more liberal education than has heretofore been considered necessary ; emancipation must follow as a

matter of course. Some of the writers have taken upon themselves the task of vindicating the privileges enjoyed by the Asiatic women, and have attempted to shew that, in point of fact, they are not under any restrictions at all ; but such persons have no chance against the advocates for improvement : the reasoning on both sides is not a little curious, bearing strong evidence of the novelty of the subject, and the crude ideas it has engendered.

The custom of polygamy appears to be the grand difficulty to the approximation to European manners, which upon many accounts would be so desirable ; but it is astonishing how very little is known concerning the domestic establishments of either Moslem or Hindoo.

A modern Persian writer * has said that, from his own experience in the matter, it is easier to live with two tigresses than two wives ; and in India, many more persons than is usually supposed, either through individual attachment, or for the sake of peace and quietness, content themselves with one. There is always so great a distinction between the first wife, and those who submit to take an inferior rank, that no persons of wealth or family would permit their daughters to contract a marriage with a man who has already placed a lady at the head of his establishment ; and, therefore, it would appear that, in reality, there is rather a plurality of mistresses than of wives ; and that, though the custom of the country sanctions their living together, the first, or, as she is sometimes

* Abu Taleb Khan.

termed, the *equal* wife, is the only person of great respectability or consequence, the other women being either in a very subordinate capacity, or degraded to the condition of household servants.

Few things are more surprising to native gentlemen than the display of female talent in arts or acquirements which have been considered the exclusive possession of men. Accomplishments, particularly those of music and dancing, are not held in any respect; but their encomiums upon female artists and authors, shew that they entertain great reverence for such manifestations of intellectual superiority. A Mahratta general, at a ball, asked to be introduced to the lady who had written a book; and in looking at miniatures from a female pencil, it was frequently remarked that the English women exceeded the men in talent.

Want of urbanity, a too common trait in the English character, will, it is to be feared, retard the good understanding which ought to exist between natives of rank and the servants of their foreign rulers; but there can be little doubt that our retaining the possession of India will mainly depend upon the conciliation of a class of persons, whom it appears to have been hitherto the policy to depress and neglect, if not to insult. Natives of rank, property, and influence, must speedily acquire a knowledge of their position and of their strength; and unless they should obtain the respect, consideration, and importance, which seem so justly their due, it can scarcely be expected that they will continue to give their support to a government, whose servants are resolutely

opposed to their interests. Hitherto there has been little to tempt them into private society ; with very few exceptions, Anglo-Indian residents have been indisposed to impart or to receive information from natives ; they have taken little pains to instruct them upon the subject of modes and manners which must have struck them as being odd and unaccountable, or to inspire them with respect by the display of superior mental powers. But while ball-rooms have been deserted, the theatre has always proved an attraction. Parties of Hindostanee gentlemen, beautifully clad in white muslin, and, should the weather be cold, enveloped in Cashmeres, which would make the heart of a Parisian lady swell with envy, take their places in the boxes of the Chowringee theatre, sitting in the first row, and as near the stage as possible. They prefer tragedy to comedy ; and when the treasury is very low, and a full attendance of some consequence, the manager, consulting rather the interests of the house than the talents of the actors, announces the representation of *Macbeth* or *Othello*, which is sure to crowd the benches with Asiatic spectators.

A spirit of inquiry is now awakened in the minds of the natives, which cannot fail to lead to very important results ; their anxiety to render themselves acquainted with the means by which science has been enabled to produce such extraordinary effects, will establish the bond of union so much wanted between them and the European residents. At the formal visits, to which the intercourse has until now been too much restricted, the greater portion of

gentlemen holding official situations, have found the mode of conversation, carried on according to eastern etiquette, too irksome for long endurance ; and rather than submit to usages and customs which were new and disagreeable, they abridged all communication as much as possible, giving very little encouragement to the natives to persevere in the attempt to cultivate a better understanding. Where no interpreter is required, persons of equal rank, upon visits of ceremony, rarely converse with each other. Their observations are directed to the chief personages of their retinue, and the individual thus circuitously addressed, replies in the same manner. There is something very absurd in seeing, at some small military post, an interview of this nature take place between the English commandant and a petty rajah in the neighbourhood. The latter makes his appearance with as large a *sunwarree* as he can muster ; his elephants, horses, state-palanquins, *hircarrahs*, *peons*, and matchlock-men, many in very ragged case, are drawn up in an imposing manner on the outside, and he enters, accompanied by the younger branches of his family, and hangers-on of a rather inferior description, who put themselves behind the chairs set for the great people. However averse the officer thus visited may be to ostentation and parade, his servants have his honour too much at heart to permit him to use his own discretion ; they crowd into the antechambers and verandahs, those at the head of the establishment take up a position which enables them to support their master's dignity by becoming the medium of communication ; conversation is thus necessarily reduced

to common-places, and, excepting when circumstances require an almost daily intercourse, Europeans are seldom or ever at the pains to place it upon a more friendly footing.

While we must regret that so long a period has been suffered to elapse, without cementing a closer bond of union between the Anglo-Indian and the Asiatic community, it would be unfair not to make allowances for the peculiar position of the British residents in Hindostan. An Englishman always finds it very difficult to accommodate himself to foreign usages and customs; and as the greater number of civil and military servants were placed in very responsible situations, they might consider it advisable not to incur the suspicion of an interested partiality, by an intimate personal acquaintance with natives, who in their official capacity they might be supposed to favour from some selfish motive. It must also be considered, that, although we have now full and undisputed possession of the whole of the Peninsula, the quiet settlement of the country under British rule has been effected within a limited period, and that in the difficult position in which Europeans were placed, it would have been impolitic to mix themselves up with persons who, in all probability, would have taken advantage of confidence too rashly placed. It is highly honourable to the British character, that, in spite of its want of urbanity, and the little personal affection which it creates, its uprightness and steadiness have secured the fidelity of immense multitudes bound to a foreign government by the equal distribution of justice and the security of property. It is

unfortunate that we cannot unite the more endearing qualities with the moral excellences for which we are distinguished : but, as the aspect of affairs is altering in India, we shall do well to consult the signs of the times, and remedy those defects which we have found in our system before it be too late.

It is greatly to the credit of the natives of India that they are disliked and despised only by those who are either unacquainted with their language, or who have been very little in their society. From such men as Mr. Hastings, Sir John Malcolm, Colonel Tod, Sir Thomas Munro, Mr. Elphinstone, and indeed all who have had opportunities of becoming intimately acquainted with them, they have received justice ; their faults and vices are those of their religion and their laws, but, notwithstanding almost innumerable circumstances adverse to the formation of moral character, they possess many endearing and redeeming virtues, and no people in the world are so quick at discerning merit, or so ready to acknowledge it.

The latest accounts from Calcutta state, that the present Governor-general has determined to break through "the unjust and aristocratical distinctions which," as the writer terms it, "have for so long a period *festered the feelings* * of those in the less elevated grades of Indian society," by extending the invitations to Government-house to persons who, previous to his appointment, had not been considered eligible to so high an honour. Whether this measure,

* The study of grandiloquence cannot be pursued to more advantage than in the columns of a Colonial Newspaper.

which relates to the European portion of the community, will produce the good effect which the commentator of the *India Gazette* so fondly anticipates, is exceedingly questionable. He tells us that it will "strengthen the attachment to the government, and enable individuals in different stations of life to form intimacies engendered by merit." Few persons above the very lowest orders are desirous to destroy all the distinctions of rank ; an unlimited *entré* into Government-house to Europeans of every description would not, we believe, be considered advisable, and wherever the line of demarcation shall be placed, there will be discontent. Those who are most anxious to gain admission for themselves, feel equally desirous to exclude the class immediately beneath them ; and on inquiry it will be found that those shopkeepers, who complain of the prejudices which kept them out of the best society, refuse to associate with trades which are not considered so genteel as their own. The reception-rooms at Government-house may be crowded by all sorts and conditions of men, but so far from engendering friendships between them, the only effect of such indiscriminate assemblages will be to bring the public parties into disrepute, and to render private society more rigid and exclusive than ever. *

* Cards of invitation to the balls and parties of Government-house have been lately sent to persons in the pilot service : very respectable men, no doubt, but, from their habits, education, and manners, scarcely fitting guests for the circle of a court. It is said that even the stewards of ships found entrance into these promiscuous assemblies, and that the company altogether made a strange appearance. Some of the gentlemen chose to appear in

There is already a tendency to divide and separate in the Anglo-Indian community of Calcutta; several circles are now forming where one alone formerly embraced the whole of the resident gentry. In a less extensive population, every body of a certain rank became acquainted with each other, and visited without reference to superiority of income, or of the different degrees of honour attached to their individual occupations and pursuits; but as the number of residents have increased, they have been attracted to each other by similarity of circumstances. New arrivals have become too numerous to excite general observation and attention, and the hospitality which they experience is confined to those to whom they have been particularly recommended. Now that there is a choice of visitors, people are beginning to be fastidious, and to look with disdain upon parties which are not select; and in a short time Calcutta will resemble London in its exactions of certain passports and credentials for admission into the best society. When to visit at the Government parties ceases to confer any distinction, the leading people of the presidency will only give their attendance when it cannot be avoided. Invidious differences deshabelle, wearing white calico jackets, and carrying white beaver hats under their arms; others were requested to withdraw in consequence of the unruliness of their demeanour; while those who were too well conducted to transgress the bounds of decorum, spent their time in a very uncomfortable state of restraint. On one of these guests being asked, how he was amused at the party; he replied, "Pretty well; five or six of us got together and sat down." This person brought his invitation with him to England in order to convince the incredulous.

will be made between private and public nights, and the feelings of those who are excluded will continue to fester, upon the discovery that little or nothing has been gained by a relaxation of court etiquette. At no period has exclusion from Government-house rendered the party ineligible to admission to private society in Calcutta, where the distinctions are certainly not more invidious to Europeans than those of any other city.

The position of Indo-Britons at Government-house is somewhat singular, and it perhaps would have been advisable to have extended invitations to respectable persons of that class. In this case, native prejudice has been more considered than the aristocratic feeling which has excluded retail dealers, who boast an unsullied descent from European parents. The natives look down, or at least have looked down, with great contempt upon a mixed breed, which upon the maternal side must have sprung from the lowest or the least virtuous class of society ; and Anglo-Indians, who chose to associate with the half-caste children of the soil, forfeited their claims to mix among their equals. To be seen in public with, or to be known to be intimate at the houses of Indo-Britons, was fatal to a new arrival in Calcutta ; there was no possibility of emerging from the shade, or of making friends or connections in a higher sphere. The better classes of the Eurasians, as it is now the fashion to call them, bore their exclusion with more equanimity than the European shopkeepers, though certainly their case was the harder of the two ; many were merchants on a very extensive

scale, whose occupation could not be objected to, the tint of their skin being the only thing against them. Latterly, however, a great stir has been made by this portion of the community, who, in the orations with which the Town Hall has rang, and the appeals issuing from the press, descant with more eloquence than judgment upon the wrongs of their country, sometimes arrogating to themselves the glory of their maternal ancestors, and at others claiming the rights of Englishmen, and demanding to be placed in official situations under a government which they represent to be little better than an usurpation.

For a very long period, no half-caste was admitted into Government-house; marriages with this class of the community were discouraged by banishment from society, and even by the forfeiture of office. Nevertheless, the charms of the dark-eyed beauties prevailed; a man of high rank contrived to introduce his wife; other married ladies were admitted, there being no longer any plea for their exclusion; but it was still a long time before exceptions were made in favour of illegitimate daughters. Several succeeding Governors-general positively refused to admit them; and it is not exactly known how their entrance was effected at last. These young ladies form the only individuals of their sex who enjoy greater privileges than are allowed to the masculine portion of the same class. Emancipation from the restrictions which oblige them to move in a very inferior grade of society, has been rigidly denied to the sons of Europeans by native women; their only employments leading to wealth have been wholly mercantile, and the greater number

have been only qualified to fill the lower orders of clerkships. At the orphan schools, the sisters of families are taught to dance ; but that accomplishment is not considered necessary in the education of the brothers, and the young ladies, conscious of their superior prospects, look down upon their male relatives with undisguised disdain. Nearly all the females aspire to marriages with Europeans, and are with great reluctance prevailed upon to unite themselves to persons of their own class. The men are less ambitious ; they are afraid of being despised by their wives, or perhaps, in consequence of the greater difficulty of forming alliances amongst persons of a different complexion, are content to match with those of their own condition.*

The city of Calcutta is indebted to the Marquess Wellesley for the erection of Government-house. Previous to the appointment of that nobleman to the viceroyship of India, there was nothing in the city worthy of the name, or at all superior to the residence in Fort William, intended for the retreat of the Governor-general in the event of the attack of the city by a hostile force. A great part of the furniture and ornamental decorations were purchased at the sale of General Claude Martine's effects at Lucknow ; but they are little worthy of the edifice. There are a few

* It cannot be too strongly impressed upon the reader's mind, that these exclusions originated in the prejudices of the natives, who, while professing their willingness to be governed by Europeans, absolutely refused to submit to persons springing from outcast females. Hence the impossibility of admitting half-castes into the Company's army.

good portraits in the council chamber, those of Lord Clive and Mr. Hastings being esteemed fine specimens of the art; altogether, however, the interior disappoints, falling far short of the expectations raised by the size and external grandeur of the building, and the power of the Government by which it has been erected. Its pinnacles are the favourite resort of the *argeelah*, or butcher-bird, commonly called the adjutant. It is said that every one of these animals has its peculiar roosting-place, and, as they stand motionless on their perches, they are frequently mistaken at a little distance for stone appendages of the building.

Notwithstanding the exclusions which are described to be so “festering to the feelings,” the walls of Government-house have witnessed an odd *mélange* of guests; many have strutted in great importance along its lighted saloons, whose pretensions to such an honour would have been considered more than doubtful in England.

The *entré* is extended to captains of free-traders, some of whom seem rather out of their element in fashionable parties; but the honours paid to merchants in the naval service are, in the present day, as nothing compared to the glories of their reception before the trade was open, and when they brought intelligence ardently looked-for, and supplies of still greater importance. Formerly, the commandant of an Indiaman was received in Calcutta with a royal salute; his colonial rank was equal to that of a post-captain in the royal navy, and he was not less of a bashaw in the state-apartments of Government-house than on the

boards of his own quarter-deck. Skippers of chartered vessels trading to India were aspirants for seats in the direction ; they made enormous fortunes by the sale of their cargoes ; and a passage home in their floating hotels amounted to a sum, the interest of which would have maintained a moderate person in comfort for life. Old Indians are fond of reverting to these glorious days, when money was plenty and news scarce ; when vessels were a year upon their voyage, and their freight, always insufficient to supply the demand, sold at the most extravagant prices ; when people contrived to get in debt upon princely fortunes, and accustomed themselves to so lavish a profusion of money, that they found they could not return home unless they had the Bank of England at their command. It was in these days that the parties at Government-house were in their glory. When the visitants felt their importance, and were looked up to by the inferior orders of the community as kings and princes, men high in office never appeared without their *chobdars* ; and all the natives whom they met were obliged, according to the custom of the country, to alight from their vehicles, and remain standing until they had passed. It was necessary, in earlier times, for the English rulers to imitate the state and grandeur of the native potentates in their neighbourhood, who insisted upon this mark of respectful homage, and to which Europeans resident at their courts were compelled, however reluctantly, to submit.

In a letter, dated 1776, we see how deeply the indignity, thus sustained by an Englishman, rankled in his mind. Speaking of the death of Cossim Ally

Khan, who had experienced great reverses, and expired in poverty without friends or followers, the writer, an officer in the Company's service, says: "In passing by his children the other day, I could not help recollecting the having once, at Patna, been obliged to dismount from my horse, and wait a-foot till his retinue had passed me, before I was permitted to mount again or to retire. I could have done the same by his children; but I bear no malice, *and besides he could not well have known it himself.*" At Delhi and Lucknow, the approach of the king is still announced by kettle-drums, which warn all other passengers to get out of the way; all the umbrellas are furled, and the people who are unable to effect a retreat are obliged to descend from their carriages and stand on foot, with folded hands, while the royal personage passes. The Resident alone is permitted to keep his *chattah* over his head in the presence of the king of Oude, the rest of the Europeans being still obliged to endure the scorching rays of the sun unsheltered, while they have the honour to be in the monarch's company.

Such customs were only kept up by Europeans as long as they were positively necessary. The Governor-general now goes about Calcutta, not only without state, but in the humblest manner; the present viceroy * having, it is said, upon more than one occasion, asked a seat in a buggy of a stranger, who did not guess the rank of his companion until he was requested to drive to Government-house; like the most celebrated caliph of Bagdad, he was fond of perambulating the city *incog*. Though, in former times, such conduct

* Lord William Bentinck.

would have brought the Government into contempt, the natives of Calcutta are now so much accustomed to the unostentatious mode of living pursued by the *Feringhees*, that they have lost a great part of the astonishment it formerly excited; still, they are of opinion that England must be a very poor country, in which people live so miserably that they do not know how to assume the state to which they might aspire in India.

Every native, however, who comes to England, expresses his surprise at the splendour which meets his gaze. The number and magnificence of the equipages particularly attract their notice. At one of the late drawing-rooms, two suwars, who have made their way to the Court of Directors from the Upper Provinces, expressed their admiration in a very lively manner of the carriages and horses which they saw assembled in St. James's Street. Several officers who spoke their language were amongst the spectators, and they derived infinite gratification from the questions and remarks of these men. They asked whether there were many other cities of equal size and splendour in England, and confessed that they had no expectation of seeing the wealth and comfort which were displayed in all directions. The quantity of goods exposed in the shops, and the abundant clothing worn by all ranks of the people, excited their surprise, and they will probably go back astonished that any body should be induced to leave a land flowing with riches of every description to seek their fortunes in so poor a country as India.

CHAPTER VIII.

ARRAH.

THE beauties of the province of Behar have become extensively known from numerous drawings and lithographs, by the pencil of Sir Charles D'Oyley, whose views of this part of India and of Dacca are in possession of all who have the means of gratifying a taste for the splendid scenery of our Indian territories. River travellers have little opportunity of judging of the richness and fertility of this fine tract of country, since its aspect towards the Ganges is less luxuriant than that of the greener shores of its neighbour, Bengal ; but in penetrating a little into the interior, every step is fraught with objects replete with interest. The province is not destitute of hills ; and the whole surface is sufficiently undulated to give variety and picturesqueness to the views, which are distinguished by a quiet kind of beauty exceedingly delightful to the eye. Numerous mosques and pagodas, perched on rocky eminences, or embosomed in trees, form the principal features, diversified occasionally by fine old Moosulmaun tombs in equally happy situations.

Arrah, a small, and, as it is technically termed, "civil" station, five-and-thirty miles west of Patna, is one of the prettiest places of the kind in India. The society is very limited, seldom consisting of more than five families, those of the judge and the collector, their

respective assistants, and a surgeon. Not many European stations are without indigo factories in their immediate vicinity ; but when they are few in number, a variety of circumstances may occur to prevent their contributing their quota to the society of the place. The owners are not always resident; and where there are no ladies in the family, in those seasons of the year in which the planter is wholly occupied by the process of manufacturing the indigo, there can be little communication between him and his neighbours. Sometimes the station is nearly deserted, the judge and the collector betaking themselves to the woods, and making the circuit of the district in pursuance of their official duties.

It was at one of these periods that I paid my first visit to this beautiful spot ; and though it could scarcely be dignified by the name of an adventure, it formed one of the most interesting and romantic incidents of a journey of seven hundred miles, undertaken alone, and with so limited a knowledge of the language as scarcely to permit me to boast of any acquaintance with it at all. Arrah had been mentioned by the post-master at Benares (from which station, after a rest of a few days, my journey had been continued) as a convenient halting-place for twenty-four hours, since, before I reached it, passing the hot period of each day at Ghazeepore and Buxar, I must be three nights upon the road ; a prospect threatening considerable fatigue, with the few chances of obtaining anything save broken and restless slumbers offered by a palanquin. On my arrival at Buxar, where I had expected to be furnished with letters of introduction

to one of the principal families, I learned that all the married people were absent from their homes. The unbounded hospitality exercised all over India rendered this information immaterial, as far as my comfort was concerned ; I could have no hesitation in entering the house of an European in the absence of its owners, as I felt assured that it would not, when reported to them, be considered an intrusion ; but that, on the contrary, they would only regret that they had not been at home to receive me. I felt anxious, however, to obtain some sort of credential to supply the want of oral communication, and was therefore furnished by the post-master with a letter, written in Persian, and addressed to the servant in charge of the house belonging to the judge.

I left a dinner-party at Buxar (which I had reached in the morning) about eleven at night ; and in consequence of a mistake in the directions given to the bearers, who were not in attendance at the end of the first stage, did not arrive at Arrah until eight in the morning. The mansion of the *Burra Saib* was easily found, and in going up to the principal entrance, the worthy old sirdar-bearer aroused himself from a very comfortable repose, which he was enjoying in the verandah, to do the honours of the house. It was very evident that he could not read a word of the letter, which he twisted about in his hands with a hopeless expression of countenance ; but, nevertheless, he was quite prepared to render me every service in his power, and as we could not comprehend a single syllable which we addressed to each other, he very judiciously made my arrival known to the only Euro-

peans in the place, two young gentlemen, assistants to the magistrate and civil surgeon. Previous to the arrival of these visitors, he led the way to the apartments he had destined for my use, and I had excellent reason to be delighted with the splendour of my accommodation. Whilst perambulating the numerous chambers of this spacious mansion, under the superintendence of my dusky esquire, by a very slight stretch of the imagination I could fancy myself in the situation of a heroine of a fairy tale, following the guidance of a strange conductor through the labyrinths of some enchanted castle. I certainly had never expected to see so perfect a realization of my youthful visions of the splendid retreat of the White Cat, the solitary palace of the King of the Black Islands, or the domicile of that most gracious of beasts, the interesting Azor. Long suites of lofty and beautifully-furnished apartments extended on every side ; in the verandahs hung numerous cages filled with brilliantly-plumed birds, from the ranges of Nepaul, rare even in their neighbouring plains ; an immense chameleon had taken up its abode in a tree planted in a large tub, and enclosed with lattice-work, and many other objects equally curious met my gaze ; but I deferred a nearer inspection until I had changed my attire, and, after crossing several handsome rooms, reached a bed-chamber, which opened into a boudoir and bathing-room, the prettiest of their kind which I had yet seen in India. A sort of terraced verandah, shut in by a balustrade, and leading down by a flight of stone steps into a beautiful garden, stretched along one side of these delightful chambers ; the prospect from this balcony

was loveliness itself; beyond the bright parterres of flowers, a small lakelet spread its calm and silvery waters, while the back-ground was filled up gloriously with masses of forest-trees, bearing the richest luxuriance of foliage.

Weary and a wanderer, as I sat down amidst all this pomp of scenery, and surveyed the luxuries of the habitation which had become my temporary abode, I could not repress the vain wish that I had arrived at the end of my pilgrimage, and that I was destined to pass the remainder of my life in a retreat so well adapted to my taste, and presenting so many objects of attraction—books, pictures, flowers, and birds—to a mind already shrinking from the turmoils and troubles of the world. And now, when involved in cares and anxieties, struggling against difficulties, and perplexed by the perverse accidents of life, I cannot refrain from casting wistful glances back to that beautiful spot, sighing, as fancy tells me how calmly and tranquilly existence would have worn out in scenes so congenial to a wearied spirit. My toilette was speedily completed; and, notwithstanding my raptures—breakfast being now a subject of considerable importance—I established myself in a splendid drawing-room, which, amongst its other embellishments, boasted a very excellent collection of books, ranged in chiffoniers, which stood between large panels in the walls, filled up with oil paintings from the pencil of the accomplished master of the house: decorations rather unusual in India, where it is so difficult to cultivate a taste for the fine arts, and where so many active enemies are at work to destroy the

external appearance of volumes, generally worm-eaten and moth-eaten, if not wholly destroyed by white ants.

I had almost forgotten, over a new novel, my vexation at the obtuseness of the sirdar-bearer, who was at once the civilest and the stupidest of men, and who could not be made to understand that I required a bottle of tea, which I had brought with me, to be warmed for my morning's repast, when my studies were interrupted by the arrival of the two gentlemen before mentioned, who hastened to pay their respects to the stranger, and to offer refreshment. My wish, it appeared, had been anticipated, for my visitors were speedily followed by their servants, who spread a very excellent breakfast on the table, brought from the hospitable residence of my new friends, and which explained the unwillingness of the old sirdar to exert the powers of his art upon my humble bottle of tea: he knew that there was better provision at hand, and he was also fully aware of the breakfasting propensity of Anglo-Indians. The natives of Hindostan, though able to support long fasts, are by no means partial to abstinence from food beyond the usual hour for their meal, and readily enter into the feelings of Europeans, where eating is concerned. The common bearers, on a *dák* journey, will suggest the necessity of the traveller's taking some refreshment, and will readily exert themselves in procuring and preparing anything that a village bazaar may afford.

The rage of hunger being repressed, I entered into conversation with the gentlemen who were at once my entertainers and my guests, and learned from them

some very interesting particulars relative to the state of the province.

On passing along the road leading to the house of the judge, which is situated at the end of the village, I was struck with the similitude between the scenery of this far and foreign land with that which so frequently occurs in England. It looked like the approach to some populous hamlet, clustered with the houses and grounds of country gentlemen. The mansions of the European residents were too completely embosomed in trees to betray their Asiatic air; a small pagoda or two easily passed as a fantastic porter's lodge; and a large open forge, together with a yard closely resembling that of a wheelwright, completed the illusion. The village, whose outskirts had already attracted my attention, became indelibly engraved upon my memory by the narrative of some exceedingly shocking events which had lately occurred in it.

During a long series of years, the domestic quietude of Arrah had not been disturbed by brawls or bloodshed; its inhabitants appeared to be a quiet, inoffensive, industrious race, removed from all temptation to commit outrages on the persons or purses of their fellow-creatures. In the midst of this tranquillity, the judge was surprised by the sudden appearance of a peasant, who, with looks betokening the most direful alarm, informed him, that in ploughing a field in the close vicinity of the village, he had turned up the earth which covered the corse of a newly-murdered man. The judge immediately proceeded in person to the spot, attended by the *cutwal* of the place, and

other officials. The body had been stripped ; but, by some accident, the knife, with which its hasty sepulture had been effected, had dropped into the grave. Upon farther search, a vast number of human remains, in various stages of decomposition, were discovered ; the field, indeed, appeared to be a perfect Golgotha, and as no one had been missed from the neighbourhood, it followed that the victims must be strangers. The horrible system of *Thuggy* had not, at that period, been fully developed, nor was it supposed to be practised in any part of this well-governed province, which had as yet escaped the infamous celebrity acquired by so many of its neighbours. The only clue to the perpetrator of these fearful murders was afforded by the knife, for suspicion failed to rest upon any inhabitant of the quiet village, where it appeared no man distrusted his neighbour : yet, as it was scarcely possible that professional banditti could exist so close to a populous place without the knowledge of the police, the slaughter was deemed to be the work of a single assassin, living in the heart of a well-regulated community, and outwardly conforming to its simple and harmless practices. Farther investigation established the truth of this conjecture. The knife was acknowledged at once by the blacksmith of the village to be his own workmanship ; he had manufactured many such ; but a difficulty remained in tracing it to the purchaser. The owner of a toddy-shop, the only person who was in the habit of offering accommodation to travellers and wayfarers—the class to which the unfortunate victims evidently belonged—was well-known as a customer, and his apprehension

led to a disclosure of the frightful details of his infamous calling.

Dissipated and profligate characters alone, in India, indulge in the pernicious habit of drinking fermented liquors ; travellers of this description, allured by the intoxicating beverage offered by the owner of the toddy-shop, were induced to take up their quarters for the night under his roof. They were readily stupified by the effects of this potent spirit, and in that helpless condition easily became the prey of their treacherous host. It was his custom to strangle the unfortunate wretches who fell into his toils, and, after stripping, to bury them in a convenient field. Usually, he made the graves too deep for any ordinary accident to reveal their hideous secrets ; but, upon the last occasion, some unforeseen circumstance retarded the perpetration of the murder to so late an hour, that he had not time to take the proper precautions, and the whole mystery of his abominable occupation was laid open to his shuddering neighbours. The confession of the assassin placed the matter beyond all doubt, and his execution restored the quiet village of Arrah to its usual character of innocence and peace. *Thugs* are generally gregarious, but this monster, though evidently belonging to the tribe designated by that name, pursued his dreadful trade alone.

One of the relators of the foregoing incident remarked, that he had the authority of a very respectable native for believing that practised murderers frequently prowl about the roads and villages in disguise, apparently in so helpless a condition as to disarm the suspicions of travellers ; who, strong, active,

and courageous, entertain no apprehension from the sinister designs of withered, wretched-looking objects, whom they could annihilate at once with a blow. "The narrator of the following incident," continued my kind entertainer, "was proceeding homeward from Lucknow, together with some others of his friends who resided near his abode; before they had quitted the Oude frontier they fell in with a Mussulman *faqeer*, who was apparently travelling in the same direction. As is often the case with native travellers (and the custom, by the way, affords great facilities to *Thugs*), a proposal was made that they should join company; this was agreed to, and the party proceeded forward. A little farther on they met another person whose abject and scarcely human appearance excited disgust as well as compassion. He begged piteously for alms, and represented himself to be in a starving condition. The narrator, a Rohilla Patan, of some blood, felt indignant at the intrusion of this squalid stranger, who, not content with asking charity, demanded to be allowed to travel on in company; the rest of the party except the *faqeer*, who was not so scrupulous, objected also. The *faqeer*, however, assured the new comer of his protection, and gave him some rice, which he had got ready-cooked; and with this disagreeable addition to their number, the company proceeded. Towards the evening of that day, the whole of the travellers arrived near a village, in which it was proposed to rest during the night: to this all except the *faqeer* agreed; but he had some vow to perform, which obliged him to take up his quarters under a tree, and, having selected one for the purpose, he

pulled out his *narial*, or smoking apparatus, spread his carpet, and asked the mendicant, to whom he had shewn so much kindness, to go into the village and get him a piece of lighted charcoal. The main body, after exchanging compliments, parted, and went on towards the village; but they had scarcely proceeded four hundred yards before they heard a cry coming from the direction of the place where they had left their late companions. Running back with all haste, they found the *faqeer* and his miserable-looking guest struggling on the ground; but before they could reach the combatants, the former had got the better of his adversary, whom he was holding down. A knife and a divided noose were lying on the ground. The *faqeer* explained the circumstances in which he had been discovered, in the following manner: his faithless messenger had pretended to go upon the errand to the village, but, instead of proceeding thither, had hidden himself beneath some bushes, and, watching his opportunity, while the *faqeer* was busy about his smoking materials, stole softly behind him, and contrived to throw a noose over his head. The attack would have been rendered instantaneously fatal, had not the *faqeer*, while ignorant of his danger, put his hand to his throat, and luckily got his fingers entangled in the cord, which prevented it from being so closely and tightly drawn as is usual in similar attempts. More providentially still, he had a knife in his girdle; this he drew, and having severed the noose, he threw himself on the villainous *Thug*, who, now compelled to trust to personal strength alone, was speedily worsted in the conflict. The assassin being

secured, it was proposed that he should suffer death upon the spot, a punishment he justly merited ; but which, notwithstanding the abundance of proof, would not perhaps be inflicted by the judicial authorities of a country so ill-governed as that of Oude, where the greatest criminals are frequently allowed to escape ; but the *faqeer* again interceded in behalf of the ungrateful wretch, and, at his earnest persuasion, the rest of the party agreed to let him go. The *faqeer* was not, however, inclined to suffer his prisoner to escape altogether without receiving some punishment for his misdoings ; he said that he could not part with him without giving him a token in remembrance of his late adventure, and, sharpening his knife, he cut off the *Thug's* nose, and then gathering his effects together, pursued his journey with great coolness and composure.

“ Knowing the narrator of this story,” continued my new friend, “ to be a man of respectable character and undoubted veracity, as he assured me that he was an eye-witness of the whole affair, I have no doubt whatever that the incident actually occurred. From another intelligent native, with whom I conversed on the subject of those numerous hordes of banditti which, during so many ages, have been supposed to infest various parts of Hindostan, I learned that there existed a tradition which imputed the massacre of three thousand *Thugs* to the emperor Shah Jehan, who pursued these wretches with a secret but unremitting enmity, in consequence of the murder of one of his officers. The story is thus told, and, though not so well authenticated as many of a similar description,

there being no direct evidence of the facts related, is generally believed by those who have handed it down from their forefathers.

“ An officer of high repute, as well as great personal courage, was sent by the emperor on a confidential mission to Bengal. Having fulfilled his instructions, he set out on his return to the capital, and while upon the road, fell in with a considerable body of *Thugs*. Being of a wary and circumspect disposition, and, moreover, well acquainted with the habits and manners of this description of robbers, he was upon his guard, and as they dared not make an open attack, he knew that he was only in danger from stratagem. Completely alive to all the devices of his enemies, the first party, who tracked his route to a considerable distance, were unable to take him at disadvantage, and being at length weary of the pursuit, they made him over, for a sum of money, to a fresh band, who were easily incited by the report of the rich effects which he carried about with him, to attempt to possess themselves of them. These villains were as unsuccessful as their predecessors ; they found the murder beset with too many difficulties to be accomplished, and, meeting with another set of their associates, who were buoyed up with inflated notions of their own cleverness, they made the same bargain with them which had formerly appeared so promising to themselves. The officer continued to be so strictly upon his guard, that these new assailants had not a single opportunity of approaching his person, until he had nearly reached the end of his journey. The traveller's horse becoming quite exhausted, while in the midst

of a wide plain, it was absolutely necessary to afford the wearied animal a short respite ; and directing the *syce* to clean his charge and then to keep watch until he should awake, he laid himself down with his bundle of valuables by his side. The *syce* cleaned his master's horse, but, as it might be expected from a Hindoo domestic, neglected the latter part of the command, and soon weary of acting as sentinel, lay down and fell asleep. A *Thug*, who was on the reconnoitre, crept slowly and stealthily through the grass, and succeeded in flinging a noose over the bundle, which was too heavy for him to carry off without assistance ; he then retreated, but the officer, who only counterfeited sleep, aware of the whole proceeding, disengaged his property from the snare, and fastened the noose round the leg of his less vigilant *syce*. In consequence of this manœuvre, when two or three of the confederates began to draw in the line, instead of securing the prize they sought, they got nothing but the astonished and half-stupified *syce*. The officer, with a laugh, mounted his horse and rode onward until he entered the capital. Here he considered himself safe, and rejoicing at having escaped so many and such dangerous enemies, entered, as he began to feel hungry, the house of a person who kept a cook-shop, and ordered a *kubáb*, or dish of roast meat, for his regale. He was shewn into an upper apartment, furnished for the reception of visitors, and was soon supplied with what he required. A short time afterwards, a second guest appeared, who was ushered into the same room, and entertained in a similar manner. Some time elapsed, every thing remained quiet in the travellers'

apartment, who did not make their re-appearance, as the man of the house had expected them to do when they had finished their meal. Somewhat surprised, he ran up stairs, and was horror-struck by the sight of a strangled corpse lying on the floor. He recognised in the murdered man the person of the first traveller ; his assassin had effected his escape through a small window. Overwhelmed as he was by this shocking catastrophe, the cook had sense enough to know, that unless he could give an explanation of the business sufficiently clear to satisfy the *cutwal*, he should not escape death, and perhaps not even then. After some consultation with his wife and servant, he determined on concealing the affair altogether ; he therefore put the body into a large wide-mouthed jar, and tying some heavy stones about it, flung it into the river. Murder, they say, will out ; and this case proved one in point, for the cook's artifice did not succeed ; the waters refusing to conceal this foul deed, cast up the jar, which rose to the surface of the stream. It chanced that his majesty the emperor was sitting in an open balcony of his palace, and beheld the jar swimming down the river. Curiosity, or some undefinable motive, caused him to determine to see what fortune had sent in this adventure ; his commands to that effect were speedily obeyed, the jar was fished out of the water, and the dreadful nature of its contents made manifest. The king, enraged beyond all bounds by the discovery that such fearful acts were perpetrated close to his own residence, sent for the *cutwal*, and told him that he should lose his head unless he brought the murderer to punishment within a

given time. The *cutwal*, stimulated by the fear of death, made strict inquiry, but for a considerable period without success ; at length he summoned all the potters of the city, and placing the jar before them, it was recognised by the manufacturers, and traced to the owner of the cook-shop. The poor wretch loudly protested his innocence, and the king consented to spare his life on condition of his bringing the real offender to justice. The cook's wits were sharpened by the danger in which he stood, and calling to mind the person of the second traveller, he succeeded, after some time, in pointing him out to the police. A ring, which was identified as belonging to the murdered officer, being found amongst the garments of the prisoner, placed the matter beyond a doubt, and Shah Jehan having examined him privately, and thus made himself acquainted with the frightful nature of the practices and the extensive combinations of the *Thugs*, dissembled deeply, and pardoning the offender, rendered him the instrument of a more signal act of justice. Through the agency of this person, he succeeded in persuading great numbers of professional *Thugs* to enter his service ; it is said by some that he formed them into a distinct corps, but this was only a snare to ensure their destruction ; for he turned their own arts upon them, and at a feast to which they were solemnly invited, he surrounded the miscreants with his guards, and they were all cut to pieces."

These narratives, and the discussions they produced, wore away the morning ; stories of murdered travellers, however frequently told, are always invested with

a strange charm, and in the last adventure the introduction of the jar afforded a pleasing illustration of the popular tale of *The Forty Thieves*. To a lover of those agreeable fictions which go under the name of the *Arabian Nights*, some of the most delightful circumstances attendant upon travelling in India, proceed from the recognition of curious things mentioned in the wild and wonderful legends which have beguiled so many hours of our youth. The first time I saw one of the earthen-ware jars in common use in Hindostan, fully capable of containing a man, standing in the small yard of a respectable native's house, the midnight sally of Morgiana recurred to my mind, with all the freshness and vividness made by the perusal of her courageous exploit, in years long numbered with the past.

The sun being on the decline, I was tempted, by the extreme beauty of the surrounding pleasure-grounds, to walk abroad, and, attended by the two gentlemen, entered a flower-garden, in which, in addition to the blossoming plants common to India, a great variety of European exotics bloomed. With the exception of balsams, single althæas, and roses, very few of the out-of-door flowers of English growth are to be seen in the gardens of Hindostan; even the mignonette, though a native of Arabia, is not common, but will thrive, like many others, if a succession of fresh seeds can be procured; for, unless the cultivators of distant places exchange their seeds with each other, foreign productions soon dwindle and die away.

This lovely garden led to the banks of a large tank, or rather lake, one of the most beautiful of those pieces

of artificial water with which the cultivated parts of India are so profusely embellished. In the centre, an island covered with lustrous flowering shrubs, formed a nest for innumerable small white herons, with snowy crests and feet of shivered topazes. Glancing in and out of the dark green foliage, skimming along the surface of the water, or bending into it from the golden sands sloping from their flowery abode, these delicate creatures recalled to the mind the fanciful creations with which painters delight to people their enchanted islands and haunts of fairies. At every step I was reminded of the magic touches of Stanfield's pencil, so exquisitely depicting the scenery in *Oberon*, or of the still more magnificent delineations of Paradise by Martin.

Opposite to a ghaut, or flight of steps, a superb tree spreads its lofty and umbrageous canopy over a well. This monarch of the forest being held in great reverence by the Hindoo population of the place, groups of natives were gathered under it, filling their water-pots, or proceeding to and fro laden with those graceful vessels, which add such a picturesque effect to the finely-moulded forms and becoming garments of Indians of all castes. The crimson splendours of a setting sun threw a rich glow upon every object, and lit up the whole scene with hues divine. I have subsequently met with many persons to whom this glorious landscape was familiar, and who spoke of it with indifference; but even under the influence of weak health and considerable bodily fatigue, it appeared to me one of the loveliest spots of earth on which my eyes had ever rested.

My companions pointed to a small tope, which fringed the border of the tank, and told me that it had been for many years the abode of a *faqueer*, whose story was somewhat romantic. A former proprietor of this beautiful domain, in a promenade through his grounds, stumbled over a strange unsightly object, which lay huddled up under a tree. On questioning this unfortunate remnant of humanity, the miserable wretch told him that he for a long time had not had any other shelter than that which the boughs of the trees afforded, or any food excepting the wild roots and berries of the wood. He said that he had never been molested by the former owner of the estate, and that he hoped he should not now be driven out from the rude asylum for which he had conceived a strong attachment. The early part of his life had been spent with credit in the Company's military service, but, unhappily, smitten with a loathsome disease, on procuring his discharge, his wife and family refused to receive him, and thrust him from the door, and he was compelled to wander about at a distance from his fellow men, who abjured companionship with a leper. The extreme misery of his existence rendered him totally regardless of life, or the means of supporting it, and abandoning himself to fate, he lay down at night at the foot of a tree, without any security from the attacks of wild animals, and exposed to the ravages of the jackals, so bold as to gnaw the dead flesh from his hands and feet as they prowled around him, the bones in many places being laid bare. But the sufferings of this unfortunate had now reached their climax—he had met with a benefactor at last. His mental

and bodily grievances were soothed and alleviated by the compassionate kindness of his new friend, and the poor outcast leper found that, under the guardianship of a faithful follower of the divine precepts of the Christian religion, life had still many comforts and much happiness in store.

Mr. G—— lost no time in building a commodious hut, in which the maimed object of his bounty would be effectually sheltered from the inclemencies of the weather and the incursions of wild beasts. The next acquisition of the *faqeer*, after his establishment in this habitation, was rather a singular one ; he was provided with a tattoo, or country pony, which had free liberty to graze on the adjacent pastures. A beggar on horseback is frequently talked about, but seldom seen, yet the exhibition is not very uncommon in India, where mendicity is a trade, and where pretenders to sanctity ask alms while they are carried about in palanquins. The state of the poor leper's feet rendered some conveyance necessary, and he had, in consequence of the various comforts lavished upon him by his kind protector, become sufficiently attached to existence to make an effort to preserve it. Accordingly, mounted on his pony, he took his daily rounds through the village ; and those who had shunned him while lying deserted on the bare earth, now, that he had shaken off a portion of his wretchedness, and basked under the favour of a great man, crowded around him with gifts. He obtained an ample supply of food and garments from the stores of the villagers, and began to accumulate money ; though formerly so reckless of life and limb, as to remain at the mercy of savage

beasts, when possessed of an establishment of his own, he became rather particular respecting its arrangements, and, not liking the way in which it had been thatched, ordered a new roof at his own expense ; so true it is, that one acquisition always leads to the desire of others.

The *faqueer*, in all probability, died a rich man ; for, although left to perish at the period in which, disgusted with the cruelty of the world, he had abandoned himself to the most abject wretchedness, no one was deaf to the solicitations of a person who had, through the hands of a gentleman in universal estimation, received so many marks of the favour of an overruling Providence.

On my return to the house, I found dinner prepared, and the founders of the feast, taking leave, left me to the enjoyment of my repast ; and I again, while seated alone in an illuminated apartment, and attended by strange domestics, who did their spiriting silently, might fancy myself in the castle of some enchanter. Nor was the illusion dispelled until I had quitted the mansion and was upon my road to Dinapore ; for, in exploring the different chambers which led to the one in which I was to repose for the night, it was impossible to banish the recollection of those numerous errant dames in white muslin, whose adventures, in long galleries and interminable suites of deserted rooms, had charmed my fancy in days long past. Unlike the ladies of romance, however, I enjoyed profound repose, and rather unwillingly obeyed the summons of the old sirdar, who knocked at my door to acquaint me that it was time to rise. I quitted

Arrah with an indelible impression on my mind ; but can never hope to convey to my readers the effect produced by its wild tales and gorgeous scenery.

CHAPTER IX.

SKETCHES OF REMARKABLE LIVING CHARACTERS IN INDIA.

COLONEL GARDINER.—THE BEGUM SUMROO.

A FEW years ago, India presented a wide field for adventure. The distracted state of the country, the ambitious projects and conflicting interests of native princes, were highly favourable circumstances to those who brought with them a competent knowledge of the art of war and of military discipline, and who preferred a wild, erratic, roving life amongst the children of the soil, to the regular service of the India Company. There are two individuals still living in the Bengal presidency, and occupying a distinguished, though singular, position in society, whose eventful career, if circumstantially related, could not fail to prove highly interesting. The general outlines of the history of the Begum Sumroo, and of Colonel Gardiner, of Khasgunje, are known to every person who has visited the theatre of their exploits, but very few are acquainted with the details ; for such is the shifting nature of Anglo-Indian society, that it is impossible

to gain more than the passing information of the day, in places rendered memorable from circumstances of universal notoriety, but of which nobody can give the particulars.

Some apology ought, perhaps, to be made for associating the name of so gallant and highly-respected an officer as Colonel Gardiner with that of the Begum, and her still more worthless husband ; but as many persons who have not been in India, are puzzled by the announcement of the marriages or projected marriages, of the daughters of this gentleman with the nephews of the King of Delhi, an explanation of the circumstances which have produced these apparently extraordinary alliances, may prove acceptable. The writer of these pages does not pretend to know more of Colonel Gardiner than the tongue of rumour could tell, or a casual meeting in society could afford ; but so remarkable a person naturally made a strong impression, and the anecdotes extant concerning him were too singular to be easily forgotten. Colonel Gardiner's tall, commanding figure, soldier-like countenance, and military air, render his appearance very striking. When at his own residence, and associating with natives, it is said that he adopts the Asiatic costume ; but while visiting a large military station, in company with the resident of Lucknow, he wore a blue surtout, resembling the undress uniform of the British army, but profusely ornamented with silk lace.

Colonel Gardiner, who is a connexion of the noble family bearing that name, came out to India in the King's service, which he soon afterwards quitted. The cause of his resignation is variously related ; and

in the absence of an authentic account, it would, perhaps, be wrong to give sanction to any one of the reports afloat concerning it. At this period, it was impossible to foresee that the tide of fortune would bring the British Government of India into actual warfare with the sovereigns of provinces so far beyond the frontier, that human ambition dared not contemplate their subjugation. Many loyal men were, therefore, induced to follow the banners of native princes, under the expectation that they never could be called upon to bear arms against their own country ; but fate decreed it otherwise, and, in the Mahratta war, those officers who had entered into Holkar's service found themselves in a very awkward predicament, especially as they were not permitted a choice, or even allowed to remain neutral, their new masters endeavouring to force them, upon pain of death, to commit treason to the land of their birth, by fighting in the ranks of a hostile force.

In some of the native courts the English were immediately put to death upon the approach of the enemy, or on the slightest suspicion of their fidelity. Upon more than one occasion, Colonel Gardiner, who, independent of his military skill, possessed a thorough knowledge of the native character and very considerable talent, penetrated the designs of his employers, and withdrew in time from meditated treachery ; but his escape from Holkar was of the most hazardous description, not inferior in picturesque incident and personal jeopardy to that of the renowned Dugald Dalgetty, who was not more successful in all lawful strategy than the subject of this too brief memoir.

Anxious to secure the services of so efficient an officer, after all fair means had failed, Holkar tied his prisoner to a gun, and threatened him with immediate destruction should he persist in refusing to take the field with his army. The Colonel remained staunch, and, perchance in the hope of tiring him out, the execution was suspended, and he was placed under a guard, who had orders never to quit him for a single instant. Walking one day along the edge of a bank leading by a precipitous descent to a river, Colonel Gardiner suddenly determined to make a bold effort to escape, and perceiving a place fitted to his purpose, he shouted out *bismillah* ! 'in the name of God !' and flung himself down an abyss of some forty or fifty feet deep. None were inclined to follow him, but guns were fired, and an alarm sounded in the town. He recovered his feet, and making for the river, plunged into it ; after swimming for some distance, finding that his pursuers gained upon him, he took shelter in a friendly covert, and with merely his mouth above the water, waited until they had passed ; he then landed on the opposite side, and proceeded by unfrequented paths to a town in the neighbourhood, which was under the command of a friend, who, though a native, and a servant of Holkar, he thought would afford him protection. This man proved trustworthy, and after remaining concealed some time, the colonel ventured out in the disguise of a grass-cutter, and reaching the British outposts in safety, was joyously received by his countrymen. He was appointed to the command of a regiment of irregular horse, which he still retains ; and his services in the field, at the head of these brave soldiers, have

not been more advantageous to the British Government, than the accurate acquaintance before-mentioned, which his long and intimate association with natives enabled him to obtain of the Asiatic character. It was to his diplomatic skill and knowledge of the best methods of treaty, that we owed the capitulation of one of those formidable hill-fortresses (Komulmair, in Mewar), whose reduction by arms would have been at the expense of an immense sacrifice of human life. The commandant of the division despatched to take possession of it, wearied out by the procrastinating and indecisive spirit of the natives, would have stormed the place at every disadvantage, had not Colonel Gardiner persuaded him to entrust the negociation to his hands. The result proved that he had made a just estimate of his own powers: the garrison agreed to give up the fortress on the payment of their arrears; and Colonel Tod, in his *Annals of Rajast'han*, mentions the circumstance as one highly honourable to the British character, that, there being not more than four thousand rupees at the time in the English camp, an order, written by the commandant for the remainder, upon the *shroffs* or bankers in the neighbourhood, was taken without the least hesitation, the natives not having the slightest doubt that it would be paid upon presentation.*

* The above passage is preserved entire for the purpose of retaining an anecdote, which shews the impression made by British faith in India, and to afford an opportunity of apologizing to Colonel Tod for having inadvertently sought to deprive him of one of his laurels. In a conversation with an officer who served at Komulmair, he mentioned the circumstance of its capi-

The marriage of Colonel Gardiner forms one of the most singular incidents in his romantic story. In the midst of his hazardous career, he carried off a Mahomedan princess, the sister of one of the lesser potentates of the Deccan, who, though now reduced to comparative insignificance, during the rise and progress of the Mahrattas were personages of considerable consequence.

Ever the first to climb a tower,
As venturous in a lady's bower,

the sacred recesses of the zenana were penetrated by the enterprising lover, who, at the moment in which his life was threatened by the brother's treachery, bore away his prize in triumph, and sought an asylum in another court.

An European, of popular manners and military exultation, in consequence of Colonel Gardiner's adroit method of dealing with the natives, as a story current in the camp; and not having Colonel Tod's work upon Rajast'han at hand to refer to, the writer told the tale as it was told to her, unaware that the gallant and learned author was in command at the time. There is no British name connected with India for which she entertains so high a respect, and no history of the country to which she has been so deeply indebted for sources of amusement and information. In justification of herself, she can only observe, that she stated in the commencement of her account of two very remarkable personages, that the whole of the details rested upon hearsay evidence; the chapter was originally written with a view to induce Colonel Gardiner to come forward with an autobiography full of enterprize and interest, which would correct any misstatements made under circumstances so adverse to the collection of authentic information; and she can scarcely regret an inaccuracy, which could not detract from Colonel Tod's high reputation, since it has drawn from his pen the clever article which appeared in a late number of the *Asiatic Journal*.

perience, could in those days easily place himself at the head of a formidable body of soldiers, ready to follow his fortunes, and trusting to his arrangements with the princes whose cause he supported, for their pay, which was frequently in arrear, or dependent upon the capture of some rich province. In the command of such a troop, Colonel Gardiner was a welcome guest wherever he went, and, until the affair with Holkar, he had always contrived to secure his retreat whenever it was prudent to commence a new career in another quarter.

It is difficult to say what sort of bridal contract is gone through between a Moslem beauty and a Christian gentleman, but the ceremony is supposed to be binding ; at least it is considered so in India, a native female not losing the respect of her associates by forming such a connexion. The marriage of Colonel Gardiner seems perfectly satisfactory to the people of Hindostan, for the lady has not only continued steadfast in the Mahomedan faith, and in the strict observance of all the restrictions prescribed to Asiatic females of rank, but has brought up her daughters in the same religious persuasion, and in the same profound seclusion,—points seldom conceded by an European father. They are, therefore, eligible to match with the princes of the land, their mother's family connexions and high descent atoning for the disadvantage of foreign ancestry upon the paternal side. Educated according to the most approved fashion of an oriental court, they are destined to spend the remainder of their lives in the zenana ; and this choice for her daughters shews that their mother, at least, does not consider exclusion from

the world, in which European women reign and revel, to be any hardship.

So little of the spirit of adventure is now stirring in India, that the Misses Gardiner, or the young Begums, or whatsoever appellation it may be most proper to designate them by, have not attracted the attention of the enterprising portion of the European community. Doubtless their beauty and accomplishments are blazoned in native society, but, excepting upon the occasion of an announcement like that referred to in the Calcutta periodicals, the existence of these ladies is scarcely known to their father's countrymen residing in India. We are ignorant whether their complexions partake most of the eastern or of the northern hue, or whether they have the slightest idea of the privileges from which their mother's adherence to Mahomedan usages has debarred them. Their situation, singular as it may appear in England, excites little or no interest; nobody seems to lament that they were not brought up in the Christian religion, or permitted those advantages which the half-caste offspring of women of lower rank enjoy; and, acquainted with the circumstances of the case, the editors of the aforesaid periodicals do not enter into any explanation of intelligence of the most startling nature to English readers, who, in their ignorance of facts, are apt to fancy that European ladies in India are willing to enter into the zenanas of native princes.

Colonel Gardiner has of course adopted a great many of the opinions and ideas of the people with whom he has passed so great a portion of his time, and in his mode of living he may be termed half an

Asiatic; this, however, does not prevent him from being a most acceptable companion to the European residents, who take the greatest delight in his society whenever he appears amongst them. His autobiography would be a work of the highest value, affording a picture of Indian policy, with which few besides himself have ever had an opportunity of becoming so intimately acquainted. As he is still in the prime and vigour of existence, we may hope that some such employment of these "piping times of peace" may be suggested to him, and that he may be induced to devote the hours spent in retirement at Khasgunje to the writing or the dictation of the incidents of his early life.

From a personal narrative of this nature, we should become acquainted with the *Condottieri*, if they may so be styled, of India, and obtain an insight into all the complicated systems of intrigue and espionage so necessary to secure the interests of those splendid mercenaries. Colonel Gardiner had a native follower attached to his service, whose exploits were of the most daring and romantic character—a one-eyed fellow, persons who in India are supposed to be compensated for the defect in their vision by a double allowance of sagacity. This man smoked his pipe in the tent of the Pindarree chief the night before the British troops put his forces to the rout, and captured his women and baggage. Had the authorities consented to act upon the intelligence brought by this accomplished spy, the camp might have been more effectually surprised, and the leader himself taken; but though the event proved that the information

communicated by Colonel Gardiner was correct, the fidelity of his emissary was either distrusted, or the commandant did not choose to owe success to a person of his description.

In looking back upon past events, the Colonel occasionally expresses a regret that he should have been induced to quit the King's service, in which, in all probability, he would have attained the highest rank ; but, eminently qualified for the situation in which he has been placed, and more than reconciled to the destiny which binds him to a foreign soil, the station he occupies leaves him little to desire, and he has it in his power to be still farther useful to society by unlocking the stores of a mind fraught with information of the highest interest.

The life of the **BEGUM SUMROO** presents a more extraordinary tissue of events, extraordinary even in Asiatic annals, notwithstanding the numerous stepping-stones to wealth and power which were offered to the enterprising in the wild and troublous periods of Indian misrule. In early youth, this singular woman attached herself to a German adventurer, called by the natives Sumroo ; but whether this appellation was a corruption of Summers, a name he is said to have taken upon his entrance into the Company's service, or of a *soubriquet* supposed to have been bestowed upon him on account of his gloomy and saturnine aspect, is not known ; both versions of the story being equally current in India. This man commenced his career in the East as a private soldier in the English army, from which he speedily de-

serted, and made his way to the Upper Provinces. He is described as a low-born, uneducated person, so illiterate as not to be able to write his own name. He possessed talents, however, which recommended him to the notice of Cossim Ali, nawaub of Bengal, who took him into favour, and gave him the command of his army. While in the service of this prince, Sumroo perpetrated a deed which stamped his name with indelible infamy. Inviting the English residents at Patna to his table, while partaking with the most unreserved confidence of the banquet, he gave a signal for a general massacre, and not one escaped the assassin's dagger. This act of perfidy proved as useless as it had been base and treacherous; the Company's troops under Major Adams speedily recaptured the city, and soon afterwards the entire conquest of Bengal obliged Cossim Ali and his followers to seek refuge at the court of Sujah Dowlah, nawab vizier of Oude. During the remainder of his life, English officers had often the mortification of seeing this renegade basking in the sunshine of favour at the courts of native princes; and though, as their star prevailed, he was compelled to try his fortune in more distant scenes, his prosperity daily increased. He established himself at the head of a considerable force, who were attached to his person, and wanted nothing but pay to be exceedingly effective. Finding it difficult to satisfy them or their leader, Nudjift Khan put him into possession of a very considerable *jaghire*, or rather a small principality, in the province of Delhi, which the Begum retains to this day.

Sumroo died in 1776, and, at his decease, the corps

which he had raised was kept up in the name of his son, though the chief authority fell into the hands of the extraordinary woman who has since made so conspicuous a figure in Hindostan. The origin of Zaib ul Nissa (ornament of her sex), a name which, as well as the title of *Begum*, was conferred upon her by the King of Delhi, is not known. By some persons it is said that she was a dancing-girl ; and many are of opinion that she was a Cashmerian by birth, an idea which has arisen from the remarkable fairness of her complexion. But though this is not a common circumstance amongst the natives of Hindostan, instances are sufficiently frequent to render it very possible that she was born at Agra, the place in which she attached herself to the fortunes of Sumroo.

There can be no doubt that the Begum possessed a more than ordinary share of personal charms, for, at an advanced age, the remains were very striking. She is rather under the middle size, delicately formed, with fine-chiselled features, brilliant hazel eyes, a complexion very little darker than that of an Italian, and hands, arms, and feet which Zoffani, the painter, declared to be models of beauty. Of these, though now grown fat and wrinkled, she is still justly proud.

It is well known that, while apparently excluded from all share of authority, women in India in reality often obtain unlimited sway over their husbands' property. Little or nothing is said of Sumroo's son, but his widow, as she is called, speedily became a person of great importance. By some of her contemporaries it is averred that, at a very early period of life, "her highness" became a convert to the Roman Catholic

faith, which she now professes, and that she was married to the German by the forms of that church ; others seem to think these circumstances doubtful, and are of opinion that, like many Mahomedan women living with Europeans, she for a long period retained her own religion, though considering herself as much the wife of her protector as if he had fulfilled all the ceremonial of the Moslem contract.

After the death of Sumroo, the Begum entered into another matrimonial engagement with a French adventurer, a Monsieur L'Oiseaux, or Le Vassu, who had been in the Mahratta service, under General Perron, and was afterwards employed by her as commander-in-chief of the troops belonging to her *jaghire*. Like many widows, the lady soon discovered that she had committed a grievous error in the choice of a second husband ; but there are very few who could extricate themselves so boldly and artfully from the entanglement. The cause of the Begum's earnest desire to get rid of her new lord is variously related ; but, in all probability, those persons are right who have attributed it to the desire which the Frenchman manifested to return to Europe.

Native women of rank and wealth are well aware that they will lose all their consequence in a foreign country, and they usually make it a *sine quâ non*, that those whom they espouse shall agree to spend the remainder of their days in India. Naturally alarmed at a proposition which seemed to be dictated by the purest selfishness, and which assured her that she was indebted for her husband to the wealth she had amassed, and which he now desired to lavish amongst

strangers to her, by whom she would be regarded as an object of contempt, she made no outward opposition, but, dissembling, determined to circumvent a plan which threatened to be so injurious to her interests.

Le Vassu was no match in diplomatic arts for his subtle wife ; she pretended to enter with the greatest readiness into the scheme, but conjured him to keep his intentions secret, lest the troops, exasperated by the abandonment of their chief, should endeavour to detain them by force. While apparently engaged with the greatest alacrity in the collection of the gold and jewels which he proposed to carry along with him, she employed various emissaries to inflame the minds of the people against the Frenchman, and to represent his intended desertion in the most odious colours. These agents took care to contrast her love and devotion to the interests of those over whom she had been placed, with her husband's base betrayal of their confidence ; and when every thing was prepared according to her wishes, she alarmed Le Vassu with rumours of an intended revolt. She assured him that there would be the greatest difficulty in effecting their escape from a highly-excited people, who had resolved upon their destruction should they be taken in the act of quitting the province, and declaring her determination never to survive the disgrace of a capture, she represented the horrors which would ensue in such a glowing manner, and worked so strongly upon the imagination of her husband, that he agreed to follow her example, promising to kill himself should their party be insufficient to quell the insurgents.

Having made these arrangements, they set forward on their journey, attended by a strong escort, and each being provided with pistols, which the lady well knew how to use. At the appointed spot, the escort was attacked, or apparently attacked, by a party in the Begum's interest; the guards were put to the rout, and the fugitives seemed to be completely in the power of their supposed enemies. There was a great deal of confusion, and, amid several reports of musketry, news was brought to the bewildered Frenchman, that the Begum had shot herself. He instantly dismounted from his elephant, and rushing to her palanquin, found the attendants in great affliction and disorder; these people confirmed the fatal intelligence, giving as a proof the lady's veil saturated with blood. Knowing the resolute disposition of his wife, he concluded from this act of despair that all was lost; and, destitute of the resources of a strong mind, and unsuspecting of double-dealing, he saved his enemy from the guilt of his actual murder, by putting a pistol to his head.

The Begum, taking care to have better information than her luckless spouse, the moment his death was ascertained, threw open the doors of her palanquin, and mounting an elephant, addressed the troops in eloquent and impassioned language, descanting upon the affection she bore to the people bequeathed to her care by their former chief, her opposition to the wishes of the dastard who would have plundered and left them, and her determination to live and die in the discharge of the important duties which she was called upon to perform.

Until this moment, it is said, she had never appeared in public ; but the exigency of the case excused her assumption of masculine rights. Her appeal to the soldiers was received with the greatest enthusiasm, and they conveyed her back to camp with shouts and acclamations. From that period she publicly exercised all the rights of a sovereign, and has retained undisputed possession of her authority. Officers formerly attached to the Mahratta service relate that they have seen her in the zenith of her beauty, leading on her troops in person, and manifesting, in the midst of the most frightful carnage, the reckless intrepidity which seems only to belong to the other sex.

Upon one of these occasions, during the reign of Shah Alum, she is said to have saved the Mogul empire, by rallying and encouraging her troops, when those of the king were flying before the enemy. It is certain that she performed good service, and its reward was proportionate. The emperor created her a princess, or *begum*, in her own right, exalting her to a rank only second to that of the imperial family. Linking her fortunes with those of Delhi, she, with her usual foresight, shewed herself favourable to the English interests ; and, in the treaties of 1805, adroitly managed to have her territories not only confirmed to her, but exempted from the jurisdiction of the civil power, greatly, it is said, to the obstruction of all executive measures of police.

The internal management of her estate, however, renders her independence less objectionable, since she contrives to keep her subjects in excellent order, and to render the revenues extremely productive.

The town of Seerdhuna, the capital of her district, is populous and flourishing ; her fields, according to common report, look greener, and her peasantry more contented than those of native states, or even of the Company's provinces in her neighbourhood. She maintains a body of troops for the protection of her own person and the collection of the revenue, besides the quota she is required to furnish to assist in the performance of the police duties at Meerut. These soldiers are under the command of officers of European descent ; but, to judge from the accounts which sometimes appear in the Calcutta papers of the abject nature of their enforced subservience to the will of an imperious and arbitrary woman, they cannot be of a very high grade.

The Begum's troops, who are principally Rajpoots, —tall stout men, but, like all the retainers of native princes, of haughty and insolent demeanour—are clad in uniforms of dark-blue broadcloth, loose vests, reaching nearly to the feet, and fastened round the waist with scarlet cummurbunds ; their turbans are of the same colour, and they are well armed and mounted. Her highness has also a park of artillery in very excellent order ; and altogether does not make a contemptible appearance in the field.

The siege of Bhurtpore revived all the military ardour of the Begum, who was very desirous to appear before the place in person, and to obtain some share of the glory and the prize-money. The commander-in-chief, who did not think her handful of retainers of much importance, endeavoured to reconcile the amazon to her exclusion, by offering to place the holy

city of Muttra under her charge ; but, observing that, if not seen at the post of danger, the people of Hindostan would say she had grown cowardly in her old age, she pitched her tents in the neighbourhood of the head-quarters' camp, and carried her point so far as at least to have the honour of being present at the capture of the fortress.

The revenues of the Begum are estimated at ten lacs, or £100,000 sterling, and she is supposed to be in the possession of immense treasures amassed during a very long and prosperous life. The principality of which she is the sovereign is about twenty miles long, twelve broad, and seventy in circumference. Her palace is built in the European fashion, and she has also erected a church there, after the model of St. Peter's at Rome. Both the design and execution of this cathedral are very beautiful ; the altar of white marble, brought from Jyepore, and inlaid with cornelians and agates of various colours, being particularly rich and splendid. The gardens at Seerdhuna are celebrated for their fruit-trees, and especially for the groves of oranges, lemons, and citrons, which perfume the air with their blossoms, and weigh down the branches with their golden treasures.

The Begum also possesses a mansion at Delhi, which was formerly her favourite place of residence ; it is situated at the upper end of the Chaudry Chowk, and crowns an eminence in the centre of a spacious and stately garden, laid out according to the prevailing fashion of the East. Its parterres are thickly planted with the choicest fruits and flowers, and it is traversed by avenues of superb cypresses, whose luxuriant

though melancholy beauty atones for the formality of their appearance. During the period of Lord Lake's sojourn at Delhi, and for many subsequent years, the Begum was wont to give superb entertainments, and to receive the highest marks of respect from her European visitors. She has probably been a little spoiled by flattery, and has acquired rather too inflated a notion of her own political importance, since it is said that, on her excursions to Delhi, during the latter years of her life, she did not pay the usual tribute of homage to the resident, of a visit, which, as the representative of the British Government, he has a right to expect from all persons of inferior rank.

The omission, in process of time, was reported to the supreme authorities at Calcutta, and the Begum, duly admonished, proceeded in form to the residency, though with a very ill grace. In fact, her pride was so deeply hurt by this enforced concession, that she speedily turned her back upon Delhi, declaring at her departure that she would never enter its walls again. She has kept her word, residing at places in which her dignity is not lowered by the presence of so high a functionary. Her palace at Seerdhuna is under the same ban, though not from the same cause. Some of her astrologers have predicted that her return will be marked by her death; and, though long past the usual period of existence, she has not the least desire to be gathered to her forefathers, and, in avoiding the fatal spot, hopes to retard her doom. She is building a house at Kinwah, about eleven miles distant from the capital of her fief, and possesses one at Bhurtpore, and another in the neighbourhood

of Meerut, outside the cantonments, which is now her principal residence. Here she gives splendid entertainments, particularly to the great personages who travel in that direction. She has long since abandoned the restrictions imposed by Asiatic prejudice, and sits at table with large parties of gentlemen without scruple. She formerly attended to the Mohammedan precepts as far as they related to the preparation of food ; but, having once passed the Rubicon, she refused to return to her trammels again, not even following the example of the English ladies, when they retired from table, but preferring to remain with the gentlemen, on the plea that she made it a point never to leave her " pipe half-smoked."

The dress of the Begum differs in some degree from that of other Hindostanee ladies, her highness choosing to substitute a turban for the veil invariably worn by the females of her country ; a circumstance which, though apparently trifling, shews that she entertains little or no regard for native opinions and prejudices, the turban being only assumed by dancing-girls during some performances which are considered highly indecorous, and are not exhibited before ladies. The Begum's costume usually consists of a short full petticoat of rich stuff, which displays a few inches of her gold or silver brocaded trowsers. The *coortee* and under-garment are similar to those worn by other ladies, and she throws a shawl over her turban, which envelopes her throat, arms, and shoulders, in the muffling though not ungraceful manner in which the veil is worn in India. Her slippers are as bright and as small as those of Cinderella, and notwithstanding

the near approach of her eightieth year, are displayed with a considerable degree of coquetry. She smokes out of a magnificent hookah, and upon most occasions is decorated with a prodigious quantity of jewels.

The property of every kind, which this fortunate adventurer has accumulated, is immense; her stud of horses is one of the finest in Hindostan, and she drives about in a carriage-and-four of English fashion and Calcutta build, which boasts, or at least did boast when it was first launched, a high degree of splendour. It is a large, bright-yellow coach, with silver mouldings, the window-frames of solid silver, and the lace and hangings, which are very rich and substantial, also of silver, with splendid bullion tassels; the lining is of violet-coloured satin, embroidered with silver stars, and the postillions are in blue and silver liveries.

The Begum, during her latter years, has frequently sat for her portrait to a native artist, who takes excellent likenesses, and having had the advantage of European instruction, has made considerable progress in the art. One of these, a miniature, is in the possession of Lord Combermere, for whom her highness professed the warmest degree of friendship. In former days, our Indian Catherine was distinguished for elegance and grace; and whenever she had a point to carry, she employed such captivating and fascinating arts, that she seldom failed to succeed. She does not speak any language except Hindoostanee, and her increasing years and infirmities have reduced the beautiful and dignified heroine of a thousand fields, to a decrepid old woman, who is still, however, courteous and polite, and not insensible to the homage

formerly so freely rendered, but which now seems only to proceed from a sentiment of pity, or a love of the ridiculous.

Unhappily, the character of the Begum is stained with cruelties of so deep a dye, that respect for her talents is merged in abhorrence for her crimes. The natives say, that she was born a politician, that she has allies every where, and friends no where, and there is much truth in these assertions: for, though liberal to her dependants, she is accounted a severe mistress, and, before the occupation of the neighbouring provinces by the British Government, did not scruple to commit atrocities of the most frightful nature. The darkest stories are circulated of murders perpetrated by her order, and in her own presence; some of her subjects she is said to have impaled alive, and others barbarously mutilated. But the most shocking tale is connected with a fertile cause of female cruelty and revenge. She became jealous of one of the females of her household, and, not satisfied with depriving her of existence, prolonged her sufferings and rejoiced over them with a savage barbarity which can only be compared to the sanguine ferocity of the tigress, tearing and torturing her prey before she gives it the final stroke. The unfortunate girl was buried alive under the floor of the apartment occupied by her mistress, who slept upon the spot in order to feast her ears with the dying groans of her victim, and to prevent the possibility of a rescue; the whole establishment compassionating the fate of the hapless creature who had fallen under the clutch of so relentless a monster.

The seclusion in which Hindoostanee women are obliged to live is not favourable to the formation of the female character, nor does it tend to soften and improve the heart. Women of strong feelings, for want of other excitement, are apt to exercise the most wanton cruelties upon their dependants, and the zenana is frequently a scene of the greatest misery. The slave-girls of the princesses of Delhi have been known to escape from the palace and fly to the British residency for protection; and surrounded by such examples, and armed with absolute power, it is not surprising that a woman of so determined a character as the Begum Sumroo should have exceeded all her cotemporaries in the recklessness with which she indulged her hatred against those who had the misfortune to offend her.

The Begum's first husband, the founder of her fortunes, is buried at Agra. She, herself, is said never to have had a child! But the son, mentioned as the successor to the *jaghire*, of whom nothing in India seems to be known, certainly left some offspring, who have formed alliances with Europeans and Indo-Britons. The Calcutta papers, of October 1831, announced the marriages of two gentlemen, John Rose Troup, Esq., and Monsieur Peter Paul Mari Le Caroli, with the daughters of Colonel George Alexander Dyce, great grand-daughters of the Begum Sumroo. The ceremony was performed in the cathedral of Sancta Maria, at Seerdhuna, by the padre Julius Cæsar, and that of Mr. Troup was afterwards celebrated a second time at the Begum's palace, by the protestant chaplain of Meerut.

Several priests of the Roman Catholic persuasion are settled at Seerdhuna, and their influence over the Begum, which is said to be very considerable, will, it is to be hoped, lead to a deeper sense of her misdeeds than that self-satisfied old lady appears at present to entertain. She could scarcely be in better hands than those of father Julius Cæsar, who realizes the most beautiful ideas which could be formed of a Christian minister. Destitute of ambitious hopes, and debarred from those ties of kindred and affection which tend to reconcile the protestant clergy to a residence on a foreign shore, he devotes all his time and thoughts to the preservation and enlargement of his little flock. Though occasionally to be found at Seerdhuna and other places where a Catholic community is assembled, his residence is in the city of Patna, where he has a small congregation. He is the only European who has ever taken up his abode within the walls since the cold-blooded massacre which took place in 1764, and he is universally respected by the natives, who regard with great veneration those persons belonging to the priesthood who act up to their clerical profession, whatever their religious opinions may be.

In times of expected irritation or tumult, the services of the padre are frequently called for in aid of the civil authorities, and he is always ready to employ his influence in the promotion of any good work. His talents and amiable character render him a welcome and an honoured guest at the houses of the British residents at Bankipore, a civil station in his immediate neighbourhood ; and Bishop Heber seems scarcely to have done justice to this excellent man, in ascribing

his popularity to the smoothness of his manners, and his tact in administering to the self-love of his associates. Father Julius Cæsar is a Franciscan friar, wearing the garb and practising the self-denial enjoined by his order, the products of his little cure being barely adequate to the support of a very humble establishment.

The Begum's court at Seerdhuna has been the asylum of European adventurers of various ranks, who, disappointed of the golden harvest which they had hoped to reap in the fertile fields of India, have been content to sit down for the remainder of their lives upon appointments which gave them more luxuries than they could command at home. Forming connexions with Asiatic women, or giving their children wholly up to the care of the natives, Seerdhuna has exhibited Europeans in a very singular position, having nothing of their father-land about them save the hue of their skin. Some English gentlemen, sitting at table at Agra, were surprised by the appearance of a man, whose fair complexion, sandy whiskers, and peculiar physiognomy, announced him to belong to the Emerald Isle, but whose dress and language were purely Hindoostanee. With all the native volubility, he told the story of his wrongs, his unjust dismissal from the Begum's service, and his travels in search of redress or employment. Upon being questioned upon the subject of his parentage, he said that his father was an Irishman, but seemed to know nothing farther about the matter, and to be perfectly unaware of the astonishment which his Asiatic manners and habits would occasion to those with whom he was conversing.

It is very seldom that transplantation to a foreign soil produces so complete a change in the immediate descendants of British exiles, though other Europeans, French people in particular, accommodate themselves more easily to the customs and usages of the people with whom they are destined to live. Some of the most respectable of the Begum's foreign retainers have been natives of France ; her colonel-commandant, a gentleman named Peton, who resided at her court during a great many years, was very justly esteemed for his invariable good conduct and gentlemanly manners. Latterly, her service has fallen into disrepute ; as the country has become tranquillized, the prospects of Europeans at native courts have become less brilliant, and as her highness does not offer very high emoluments, and there is no honour whatever to be gained in her employ, she is surrounded by half-castes, whose expectations are of a very limited nature, and who submit to treatment which would disgust persons of higher pretensions.

Either according to treaty, or in consequence of the Begum's gratitude for the protection she has experienced, she has made the British Government her heir, and, at her death, which in the course of nature must take place very shortly, the *jaghire* will be placed on the same footing as those under the Company's jurisdiction. The Begum is very liberal in her donations to public charities, and other popular institutions in Calcutta. After the death of her husband Sumroo, she kept up a monastery founded by him at Agra, for persons belonging to the Roman Catholic Church, of any country or nation, adding an establish-

ment for nuns ; but whether many persons of either sex have availed themselves of this asylum we have little opportunity of knowing, since European travellers pass through Agra without taking the slightest interest in any of its minor features, and the greater number are quite content with casting a listless glance upon the buildings of note which are to be seen in the fort and the cantonments.

The Begum exercises the almost boundless hospitality which native custom has prescribed to those who are placed at the head of a fief or large estate, entertaining the whole of the servants and camp-followers of parties of travellers, to whom she is desirous to pay respect and attention. The supply of firewood, ghee, grain, and sweetmeats, to the multifarious attendants of the ambulatory establishment of a great man, is a serious affair ; but her highness always does the thing handsomely, and the people who are feasted at her expense have no cause to complain of the meagreness of their fare. Salutes of cannon are fired, and her troops are turned out, whenever her capital is visited by travellers of distinction, and while the retainers are furnished with the materials for a feast, the ladies and gentlemen are invited to her own table, sumptuously covered at breakfast and dinner, the banquet being followed by *nautching* and fire-works.

CHAPTER X.

DELHI.

THERE is no place in British India which the intellectual traveller approaches with feelings more strongly excited than the ancient seat of the Mogul empire. The proud towers of Delhi, with its venerables reliques of Hindoo architecture, its splendid monuments of Moslem power, and its striking indications of Christian supremacy, cannot fail to impress the mind with sensations of mingled awe, wonder, and delight. In no other part of our Eastern possessions do the natives shew so earnest a desire to imitate European fashions; and though, at present, the mixture, in which convenience more than elegance is consulted, produces a grotesque effect, the total overthrow of many Oriental prejudices may be safely predicted from the tolerance of all sorts of innovations manifested at Delhi.

The modern capital of the Moslem kings, which is called by the natives *Shahjehanabad*, stands in the centre of a sandy plain, surrounded on every side with the ruins of old Delhi, curiously contrasted with a new suburb, the villas belonging to Europeans attached to the residency, and with the cantonments lately erected for three regiments of sepoy. The celebrated gardens of Shalimer, with their cypress avenues, sparkling fountains, roseate bowers, and the delicious shade of their dark cedars, on which Shah Jehan, the

most tasteful monarch in the world, is said to have lavished a *crore* of rupees (a million sterling), have been almost wholly surrendered to waste and desolation ; the ravages of the Mahrattas have left few wrecks behind, and amidst these arise the palaces of the Christian rulers of the soil. A favourite retreat of Sir Charles Metcalfe, afterwards inhabited by Sir David Ochterlony, arrests the stranger's eye, as he seeks in vain to recognise, from the description handed down to us, the paradise of flowers and foliage which once adorned these arid tracts.

From the road which, it is said, formerly extended to Lahore, shaded all the way by the meeting branches of the mango trees, of which not a bough remains, the military cantonments appear, couched under a ridge of sand-stone rocks, called *Mejnoon Pahar* : some writers have likened this military array to an army in ambuscade, and the rocky screen favours the idea. The loss of the rich umbrageous foliage of the tamarinds and cedars of Shah Jehan has been inadequately supplied by a foreign introduction before noticed, the *Parkinsonias*, which thrive in an arid soil, but which require the relief of leaves to soften the effect of their gaudy blossoms. They are, when planted in groups, quite as offensive to the eye as a grove entirely composed of laburnums in full flower would be ; yet, in the cantonments of Delhi and of Agra, little else is to be seen.

Modern Delhi, or Shahjehanabad, is enclosed by a splendid rampart of red granite, and entered by gateways the most magnificent which the world can boast. The walls were formerly so lofty as to conceal all

save the highest towers ; but these dead blanks, with their flanking turrets, like the eyries of the eagle, high in air, have been exchanged for low ramparts strengthened by massive bastions. From the outside the view is splendid ; domes and mosques, cupolas and minarets, with the imperial palace frowning like a mountain of red granite, appear in the midst of groves of clustering trees, so thickly planted that the buildings have been compared, in Oriental imagery, to rocks of pearls and rubies, rising from an emerald sea. In approaching the city from the east bank of the Jumna, the prospect realizes all that the imagination has pictured of Oriental magnificence ; mosques and minarets glittering in the sun, some garlanded with wild creepers, others arrayed in all the pomp of gold, the exterior of the cupolas being covered with brilliant metal, and from Mount Mejnoon, over which a fine road now passes, the shining waters of the Jumna gleaming in the distance, insulating Selimgurh, and disappearing behind the halls of the peacock-throne, the palace of the emperors, add another beautiful feature to the scene. It is well known that the line, quoted by Mr. Moore, in *Lalla Rookh*,—

Oh ! if there be an Elysium on earth,
It is this, it is this !—

is to be found in the audience-chamber of the King of Delhi ; and though the glory of the Moghuls has faded away, and their greatness departed, the superb edifices and luxuriant gardens of this splendid capital would still render it an Eden of delight, were it not for one terrible drawback, the besetting sin of all

Indian cities,—dust. In Delhi, this plague is suffocating, choking, stifling, blinding, smothering,—in fact, perfectly unbearable. The visitors see all they can see in as short a time as possible, and hasten away to some retreat, where the parched and thirsty ground is watered, and where they may respire freely, without being forced to inhale some ounces of commingled sand and dirt whenever they venture to open their lips.

The Chandery Choke, or principal street, is wide and handsome, one of the broadest avenues to be found in an Indian city. The houses are of various styles of architecture, partaking occasionally of the prevailing fashions of the west; Grecian piazzas, porticos, and pediments, are not unfrequently found fronting the dwellings of the Moslem or Hindoo; balconies are, of course, very common, and form the favourite resort of the gentlemen of the family, who, in a loose dishabille of white muslin, enjoy the pleasures of the *hookah*, while gazing on the passing crowd below, totally regardless of the dust which fills the air.

The shops are crowded with all sorts of European products and manufactures, and many of them display sign-boards, on which the names and occupations of the inhabitants are emblazoned in Roman characters—a novel circumstance in a native city. The introduction of this useful custom is attributed to Burrudeen Khan, an ingenious person patronized by the reigning emperor, Akbar the second. This accomplished artist is celebrated for his seal-engravings, and so much delighted his royal master by the specimens

he produced, in cutting gems with the letters and devices of all nations, that he raised him to the rank of a noble, one of the few privileges still enjoyed by this shadow of a king. The English placards have a very curious appearance, mingled with the striped purdahs or curtains, which, in many instances, supply the place of doors, and the variegated screens (where animals of blue, red, or yellow, sprawl upon a green ground) which shade the windows. The houses are, for the most part, white-washed, and the gaiety of their appearance is heightened by the carpets and shawls, strips of cloth of every hue, scarfs and coloured veils, which are hung out over the verandah or on the tops of houses to air, the sun in India being considered a great purifier, a dissipator of bad smells, and even a destroyer of vermin, though its claim to the latter quality must be equivocal.

The crowd of an Indian city, always picturesque, is here particularly rich in showy figures of men and animals; elephants, camels, and horses, gaily caparisoned, parade through the streets, jingling their silver ornaments, and the many-coloured tufts and fringes with which they are adorned: the *sunwarree* of a great personage sweeping along the highways, little scrupulous of the damage it may effect in its progress, forms a striking spectacle when it can be viewed from some safe corner, or from the back of a tall elephant. The *coup-d'œil* is magnificent; but to enter into details might destroy the illusion; for, mingled with mounted retainers, richly clothed, and armed with glittering helmets, polished spears, and shields knobbed with silver, crowds of wild-looking

half-clad wretches on foot are to be seen, increasing the tumult and the dust, but adding nothing to the splendour of the cavalcade. No great man—and Delhi is full of personages of pretension,—ever passes along in state without having his titles shouted out by the stentorian lungs of some of his followers. The cries of the venders of different articles of food, the discordant songs of itinerant musicians, screamed out to the accompaniment of the tom-tom, with an occasional bass volunteered by a *chetah*, grumbling out in a sharp roar his annoyance at being hawked about the streets for sale, with the shrill distressful cry of the camel, the trumpetings of the elephants, the neighing of horses, and the rumbling of cart-wheels, are sounds which assail the ear from sunrise until sunset in the streets of Delhi. The multitude of equipages is exceedingly great, and more diversified, perhaps, than those of any other city in the world. English carriages, altered and improved to suit the climate and the peculiar taste of the possessor, are mingled with the palanquins and bullock-carts, open and covered, the chairs, and the cage-like and lanthorn-like conveyances, of native construction. Prince Baber, the second surviving son of the reigning monarch, drives about in an English chariot drawn by eight horses, in which he frequently appears attired in the full-dress uniform of a British general officer, rendered still more striking by having each breast adorned with the grand cross of the Bath. Mirza Salem, another of the princes of the imperial family, escorts a favourite wife in a carriage of the same description; the lady is said to be very beautiful,

but the blinds are too closely shut to allow the anxious crowd a glimpse of her charms. Regular English coaches, drawn by four horses, and driven by postillions, the property of rich natives, appear on the public drives and at reviews; and occasionally a buggy or cabriolet of a very splendid description may be seen, having the hood of black velvet, embroidered with gold. The *chetahs* and hunting-leopards, before-mentioned, are led hooded through the streets; birds in cages, Persian cats, and Persian greyhounds, are also exposed in the streets for sale, under the superintendence of some of those fine, tall, splendid-looking men, who bring all sorts of merchandize from Cashmere, Persia, and Thibet, to the cities of Hindostan—an almost gigantic race, bearing a noble aspect in spite of the squalidness of their attire, and having dark, clear complexions, without a tinge of swarthiness. Beggars in plenty infest the streets; and, in addition to the multitudes brought together by business, there are idle groups of loungers—Mussulmans of lazy, dissipated, depraved habits, gaudily decked out in flaunting colours, with their hair frizzled in a bush from under a glittering skull-cap, stuck rakishly at the side of the head.

Such are a few of the distinguishing features of Chandery Choke, which abounds in hardware, cloth, *pāān*, and pastry-cooks' shops, the business, as usual, carried on in the open air, with all the chaffering, haggling, and noise common to Asiatic dealings. How anything of the kind is managed, amidst the bustle and confusion of the streets, the throng of bullock-carts, the strings of loaded camels, the squadrons of

wild, vicious horses, the trains of elephants, and the insolent retainers of great men, only intent upon displaying their own and their master's consequence, by increasing the uproar, seems astonishing. The natives of India form an extraordinary compound of apathy and vivacity. In the midst of noises and tumult which would stun or distract the most iron-nerved European in the world, they will maintain an imperturbable calmness ; while, in ordinary matters, where there appears to be nothing to disturb their equanimity, they will vociferate and gesticulate as if noise and commotion were absolutely essential to their happiness.

By a very little attention to order and comfort, the Chandery Choke might be rendered one of the most delightful promenades in the world ; the famous canal of Delhi, shaded by fine trees, runs down the centre, and nothing could be more easy than to allay the clouds of dust, at present so intolerable, by keeping the avenues on either side well watered. This canal, originally the work of Feroze Shah, forms the only supply of wholesome water which the inhabitants of Delhi are enabled to obtain. Sharing the fate of the Patan empire, it became neglected, and was at length wholly choked up, remaining in this state for more than a hundred years. The canal was re-opened by Ali Merdan Khan, a Persian nobleman attached to the court of the Emperor Shah Jehan, but was again dried up and remained useless until the establishment of the British Government ; which, anxious to display its paternal care, and wishing to confer a solid and lasting benefit upon the people

of the city, determined upon repairing this splendid work. An undertaking of such magnitude occupied a considerable period ; it required three years of unremitting labour to complete it, and the expense was enormous. At length, in 1820, during the administration of Sir Charles Metcalfe, the whole was finished. All the inhabitants of the city, in a tumult of joy, went out to greet the approaching waters, shouting *Io-peans* to the Government which gave them the long-desired blessing, and casting garlands of flowers, ghee, oil, and spices, into the stream refreshing their eyes, and giving such welcome promises of fertility and abundance. Fortunately, the present rulers of India are persevering as well as enterprising ; for, in the course of a very few years, the canal again became dry, in consequence of a change in the channel of the Jumna, whose waters, flowing through another passage, no longer afforded the customary supply. The inhabitants of Delhi, with the usual Asiatic absence of foresight, had neglected the wells, which, previous to the opening of the canal, had furnished them, though inadequately, with the precious element. The expense of obtaining water for domestic purposes was heavy, and to many almost ruinous ; the gardens became deserts, and the failure of the rains increased the distress. The sufferings thus occasioned were not of long duration ; as soon as it was practicable, the engineer officer having the charge of the canal repaired the mischief, and a second jubilee took place, attended by similar festivals and similar thanksgivings, than which nothing could have been more gratifying to the English inhabitants of the imperial city.

The palace of the residency, within the walls of modern Delhi or Shahjehanabad, formerly belonged to Ali Merdan Khan, the nobleman before-mentioned. It is a large irregular building, which has been added to, and altered to suit the taste and convenience of its successive owners, the banqueting-rooms being the work of Sir David Ochterlony; some of the older apartments are adorned with elaborate ornaments and rich Mosaic paintings; it has a large garden at the back, laid out with the stately formality which is the usual style of Oriental pleasure-grounds, and the whole, though not particularly splendid, has a solemn and imposing air.

By strangers visiting Delhi, a presentation at the court of the fallen monarch is generally desired, though there are many Anglo-Indians who, with more than native apathy, pass through the city of the Moslem conquerors of India with as little interest in the great Moghul as they have been accustomed to take in his effigy, which is so unaccountably impressed upon a pack of cards. The imperial palace, erected by Shah Jehan, is a very noble building. The outer wall in front is sixty feet high, battlemented on the top, and adorned with small round towers; the gateways are magnificent. The whole is of red granite, surrounded by a moat, and, though only tenable against arrows and musquetry, has an air of strength and grandeur. The entrance is exceedingly fine; a lofty gothic arch, in the centre of the tower, which forms the portal, leads to a splendid vestibule, and through a vaulted colonnade, to the inner court. A second gateway leads to another quadrangle, in which the *dewanee*

khas, or hall of audience, is situated. The throne or pavilion of the great Moghul is of white marble, beautifully carved, inlaid with gold, and of curious construction. The roof, which was formerly vaulted with silver, is supported on richly decorated pillars; around the cornice is the celebrated inscription, "If there be a paradise upon earth, it is this, it is this!" The throne of marble, embellished with gilded ornaments, stands in the centre of this pavilion; it rises about three feet from the floor, and is canopied by a drapery of cloth of gold, bordered with seed-pearl; there are no steps in front, the monarch entering from the rear, with his sons and favoured courtiers, and the rest of the assemblage standing round on the pavement beneath. The quadrangle, in which this singular edifice is placed is extremely handsome, surrounded by profusely-ornamented buildings, and adorned with flowers and fountains. The king is seated, cross-legged, upon cushions, and, except upon occasions of state, does not affect great splendour of attire, being frequently entirely wrapped up in shawls, and shewing only a few valuable jewels to the eager eyes of European strangers. The court is, in fact, shorn of all its grandeur, and the monarch, painfully conscious of his own degradation, can only be reconciled to the exhibition of himself, for the sake of the revenue afforded by the gold mohurs, which are offered as *nuzzurs* at every presentation.

The whole ceremonial of the reception at this once all-powerful court has dwindled away to a mere farce. Formerly, the distribution of the *khillauts*, or dresses of honour, was an affair of the greatest importance, and

may, probably, still be considered so by the natives, amongst whom the dependant king yet maintains the shadow of his power. The personal rank and the degree of estimation in which the person receiving the gift is held, are decided by the number of articles and the value of the materials composing the *khillaut*: swords, with embroidered belts, the hilts and scabbards being of embossed silver, or set with precious stones, shields rimmed with silver, daggers richly ornamented, splendid turbans, shawls in pairs, cummerbunds and handkerchiefs, gold and silver muslins, Benares brocades, strings of pearls and other jewels, are comprehended in the *khillauts* given to the favourites whom native monarchs delight to honour. Sometimes these rich gifts will consist of a hundred and one articles; seventy-five is a more common, and five the lowest number; these last are always of inferior quality: the greater the quantity the more rich the materials, so that the cost and value may be calculated by the number bestowed. The investiture of *khillauts* takes place in the king's presence, who, when desirous of paying a mark of peculiar respect, places a turban on the head of the favoured person: on other occasions, he merely touches the articles with his hand, and the rest of the ceremony is left to the officers of state. These magnificent presents are not wholly disinterested marks of sovereign beneficence: the individual who receives them is always expected to make an adequate return, and to present a *nuzzur* corresponding with his rank and the value of the kingly gift.

The *khillauts* presented at Delhi to the European visitants of the court are the merest frippery imaginable,

and are said, with some appearance of truth, to be manufactured from the cast-off finery of the ladies of the *zenana* : wreaths of tinsel flowers, coarse silvered muslin, and still coarser shawls, with girdles and gewgaws of the most trumpery description, dear at the price of the few gold *mohurs* which are paid for them, are graciously bestowed upon the civil and military officers of the Company, who are required to masquerade in this barbarous finery, which is put on, or rather hung on, over their ordinary attire. An officer in full uniform, with a silver muslin tunic dangling from his shoulders, or arrayed in a robe of flowered gauze, stuck with tinsel and edged with faded ribbons,

flimsy scarf fluttering from his cocked hat, or a tiara of false stones encircling the plain round beaver of a civilian, are objects continually offered to the view of spectators, who must have very rigid countenances not to betray the ridicule which they excite. The custom now would be "more honoured in the breach than in the observance," it having become nothing more than a very absurd piece of formality, rendered as cheap as possible, in order to suit the purses of those who wish to make their salaam to the king. On visits of state by functionaries of rank in the service, the expenses are paid by the Government; to private individuals repairing alone to the hall of audience, the cost is four gold *mohurs*, about eight pounds, not including a *khillaut*, which is only given on particular occasions, and forms an extra expense.

The court of Delhi is still a place of considerable political intrigue; the numerous native tributaries to the British Government have always points of great

importance to themselves to settle, which they endeavour to obtain by those crooked paths of diplomacy which Asiatics delight to tread; and persons attached to the residency, from the highest to the lowest, are, directly or indirectly, assailed by stimulants supposed to be all-powerful over every part of the East. The trade of Delhi is very extensive, particularly in shawls, for which it is a grand mart; a constant intercourse is kept up between this city and Cashmere, whence the splendid fabrics so much prized all over the civilized world are brought in immense quantities—some plain, to have borders sewed upon them, others to be embroidered in silk or gold, whence they derive the name of Delhi shawls. Nothing can exceed the beauty of the Delhi needle-work, which is in the highest esteem throughout Asia, and eagerly coveted by the rich of both sexes, the *castans* of the men being often of velvet edged with rich embroidery. The goldsmiths are also celebrated beyond those of any other Indian city, and eminently merit their high reputation. It is difficult for persons, well acquainted with the *chef-d'œuvres* of European artisans, to imagine the surprising beauty of the Delhi work—the *champac* necklaces in particular, so called from the flower whose petals it resembles. They do not succeed so well in cutting and arranging precious stones, though they are improving very fast from the instructions native workmen now obtain when in the employment of English jewellers at Calcutta. There are a great many carvers of stone and ivory in Delhi, but they have not attained to any thing approaching perfection in their art. A new and curious branch of Indian *bijouterie* has, however,

sprung up, under the auspices of an English lady ; it consists of ivory medallions, on which the principal buildings of the neighbourhood, the Kootub Minar, &c., are very delicately painted ; these are set in gold, and worn as necklaces, or sent as presents by the fair portion of the European community, and, though not of much value, are both curious and ornamental.

The gratifications afforded by Delhi, as a station for Europeans, must depend entirely upon the tastes and pursuits of those to whom the chances of the service have made it a temporary abode ; for, with the exception of a few persons, whose appointments may be considered to be fixed for life, a constant change is taking place in the society. The number of Europeans is not very great ; and the amazing superiority in rank and station, possessed by the civilians over the military, produces a jealousy exceedingly inimical to social intercourse. A dearth of unmarried ladies is frequently a subject of complaint, and when this happens at a period in which no stranger of rank is a visitant to the imperial city, gaieties of every kind are in a state of suspension.

Whenever any great person is passing through Delhi, the Residency is always a scene of festivity to those who have not excluded themselves from its hospitalities through a dread of compromising their dignity by appearing to court the ruling powers, a prejudice which is the bane of society in India, and unfortunately fostered by the folly of a few vain-glorious civilians, who, however, form a very small proportion of the whole body. In a place like Delhi, where natives of rank fancy they consult their own

interest in administering to the pride and vanity of their European rulers, a pompous, ostentatious official is rendered unbearable to all save the train of parasites such personages will always have about them. The entertainments given by the Resident are usually of a very magnificent description; the gardens are illuminated by coloured lamps, and the banquets have all the abundance considered so essential to splendour by the native purveyors.

Moosulman gentlemen of rank frequently give parties to the European visitants at Delhi, in which ladies are included, and at these the *nautch* or dancing-girls are invariably introduced: the *prima donna*, named Alfina, is a very celebrated *artiste*, outscraming all her contemporaries, and keeping possession of the floor when vainly-aspiring rivals are desired to sit down. Sometimes five or six sets of these inharmonious vocalists appear together, all singing at the same time, after the fashion of a Dutch chorus, the natives not having an idea of making their voices accord with each other. The dancing, though not equally barbarous, is exceedingly tiresome, when, as in the presence of ladies, it is circumscribed within the bounds of propriety; but there are some European gentlemen who acquire the native taste for an exhibition which, when addressed to male eyes alone, is said to be not particularly decorous.

The horror with which even those Asiatics who adopt foreign fashions in equipages and household furniture regard the manners and customs of the Europeans brought in close contact with them, is sometimes openly displayed by urgent remonstrances

to those for whom they have contracted a friendship ; but this is nothing compared to the expression of their disgust in private. In Delhi, the opinions entertained upon the subject are widely, though secretly, circulated through the medium of the native *ukhbars*, scandalous chronicles, very much resembling a few of our English newspapers, except that they are in manuscript : the language is Persian, and the editors do not scruple to write at full length the names of those who are the subjects of the most atrocious libels. It is not very easy for an European to procure a sight of the animadversions passed upon the conduct of himself or his friends ; some artifice is requisite to obtain samples of the method employed to amuse the reading portion of the native community at the expense of persons differing so widely in the habits of their public and private life. As the writers are not very scrupulous in the language they use, there is not a little difficulty in making an extract, which will display the spirit of their comments, without shocking the eye by coarseness of expression. The following description of a European entertainment will convey some idea of the estimation in which such promiscuous meetings are held.

“ The *gentlemen of exalted dignity* had a great feast last night, to which all the military chiefs and lieutenants were invited. There was a little hog on the table, before Mr. —, who cut it in small pieces, and sent some to each of the party ; even the women ate of it. In their language, a pig is called *ham*. Having stuffed themselves with the unclean food, and many sorts of flesh, taking plenty of wine, they made for some time

a great noise, which doubtless arose from drunkenness. They all stood up two or four times, crying, 'Hip! hip!' and roared before they drank more wine. After dinner, they danced in their licentious manner, pulling about each other's wives." Here follows a bit of personal scandal: "Captain —, who is staying with Mr. —, went away with the latter's lady (arm in arm), the palanquins following behind, and they proceeded by themselves into the bungalow: the wittol remained at table, guzzling red wine." The uncourteous, ungracious manner, which too many Englishmen assume towards the natives, is touched off with truth and spirit in the following paragraph: "The Government has manifested singular want of sense in appointing Mr. — to be — at —. The man is a capacious blockhead, and very hot-tempered; he can do no business himself, yet he has the extreme folly to be angry when abler persons wish to do it for him. When the most respectable Hindoostanee gentlemen waited upon him yesterday, he just stood up, half-dressed, when they salaamed, and said, 'Well, what do you want?' And when they answered 'only to pay our respects,' he growled out '*jow*' (go)." This sort of rudeness is, indeed, but too common, and seems to excite the native ire as much as dancing, wine-bibbing, and eating the flesh of pigs. Even the highest person in the state is not exempt from the lampoons of these purveyors of scandal, as the following extract will attest: "The European king and his viziers, having heard that the Governor-general is a fool, exceedingly slack in managing affairs, he is to be recalled, and a clever lord sent out to save Bengal."

Native opinion is held in great scorn, and set at defiance by the European residents of India, who, with the solitary exception of a few, refusing to eat pork, out of deference to the prevailing prejudice, indulge themselves in every thing that appears to be most hateful to the surrounding multitude. But the excesses of which they are guilty would be excused or overlooked, were they more anxious to make themselves popular by affability and kindness of demeanour. In India, public admiration is not an evanescent feeling, or liable to the mutations which attend it in Europe. The people of Hindostan have no caprice in their affections, nor do they forget the benefits they have received. Instances have been known at Delhi of natives flocking to condole with a Resident on his disgrace by the British Government, notwithstanding their hopes and expectations from his favour were at an end. And yet many persons, who have never for a single instant endeavoured to conciliate the people over whom they have been placed in authority, with power to render them happy, by accepting their services or courtesies with corresponding kindness, are loud in their invectives against native insincerity and ingratitude. It is precisely those, whose pride and insolence have rendered them objects of dislike, who thus animadvert upon the character of the people of Hindostan.

Delhi is considered to be one of the hottest places in India, owing probably to the arid nature of the country all around it, the immense quantity of buildings, which become so many reflectors, and the exceeding fury of the fiery *simoom*, which blows until ten

o'clock at night, and sometimes does not subside during the twenty-four hours. This kind of weather lasts four months, and European residents must content themselves with in-door amusements for the whole period of its duration.

The rains and the cold season are both very agreeable; but there is one plague from which the city and its environs never are exempt,—that of flies,—which come in armies similar to those which invaded Egypt in the time of Pharaoh. In addition to the usual number of *chicks*, the blinds with which the doors and windows of English houses are furnished, the outer verandahs are carefully closed in with this pretty and useful manufacture of split bamboo, to secure the interiors from the host of winged enemies which would otherwise pervade the whole atmosphere. Persons living in tents, in the cold weather, are almost driven mad by the torments inflicted by these disgusting assailants. The natives wrap themselves up in a cloth, and lie down, preferring the chances of suffocation, as the lesser evil of the two; but the European must either submit to the constant attendance of a domestic, with a *chowrie*, to beat them off, or arm himself with patience to endure.

These, however, and other inflictions of the climate, are amply compensated by the endless gratification afforded to intellectual minds by the number of interesting objects which greet the spectator on every side. A life might be spent in rambling over the ruins of old Delhi, and subjects for contemplation still remain. Next to the palace, the most striking building of Shah-jehanabad is the *Jumma Musjid*, a magnificent mosque,

erected on the summit of a rock of considerable height, ascended by three fine flights of steps. Three handsome gateways lead into a quadrangle of the noblest dimensions, paved with granite, inlaid with marble, and surrounded on three sides by an open cloister. Along this splendid area, which has a marble tank or reservoir of water in the centre, the visitor is conducted to another flight of steps, the ascent to the mosque, a superb hall, flanked with minarets, and entered by three lofty gothic arches crowned with marble domes. From the interstices of the piazza of this fine square very picturesque views are obtained ; it has not the delicacy of finish of the pearl mosque at Agra, but its proportions are much finer, and its situation, upon so commanding an eminence, gives it a great advantage over other celebrated Moghul temples. The Jumma Musjid was the work of Aurungzebe, who, like many other usurpers, endeavoured to gain a reputation for piety ; and the better to impose upon a credulous multitude, who might have attributed his desire to gain the throne, by the imprisonment of his father and the murder of his brothers, to ambitious motives, clothed himself in the rags of a *faqeer*, and in this humble guise sought the shrine of the Jumma Musjid, to pray for the success of his rebellious army. This mosque is kept in good repair by a grant of the English Government ; it is much frequented by the faithful, of whom many hundreds may be seen at a time, prostrate on the pavement. It is also the resort of numerous beggars, and the poorer classes of travellers, who find all the shelter which the climate renders necessary in the nooks and recesses of the building.

There are other mosques which, from their antiquity or the historical circumstances connected with them, excite a good deal of curiosity ; and the new suburb, called, after its projector, *Trevelyanpore*, under the village of Paharee, built to supply habitations for the increasing population of the city, is sufficiently interesting to attract a visit from strangers. The plan has been much approved for its elegant simplicity, though of course there are divers opinions concerning it. The centre, a large quadrangle, called Bentinck Square, is entered by four streets, opening from the middle of each side, and not at the angles, according to the usual European custom. The whole extent of the streets, which are ninety feet in width, and the *façade* of the square, present an unbroken front of Doric columns, supporting a piazza behind, in which are commodious shops and dwelling-houses, ranged with great regularity. The four triangular spaces at the back, formed by the arms of the cross, are intended for stable and court-yards for the cattle and bullock-carts belonging to the inhabitants. In the event of Trevelyanpore becoming a place of native resort, a plan for increasing its extent has been laid down, and a native gentleman of great wealth is constructing a magnificent gateway, of corresponding architecture, fronting the Lahore gate of Delhi, which will lead to a circus, the centre of which is to be adorned with a cenotaph to the memory of a young British officer, a friend of Mr. Trevelyan, the founder of this new quarter, which has not yet, however, been much sought after as a residence by the native population.

The grand object of attraction, in the neighbourhood

of Shahjehanabad, is the *Kootub Minar*, a magnificent tower, two hundred and forty-two feet in height, which rises in the midst of the ruins of old Delhi, at the distance of nine miles south of the modern city. It is not known by whom or for what purpose this splendid monument was erected; and conjecture, weary of a hopeless task, is now content to permit its origin to remain in obscurity. According to the general supposition, it was erected in the thirteenth century; but this is not certain, nor can it be ascertained whether the founder was Moslem or Hindoo, though the majority of opinions inclines to the latter. The great architectural beauty of this wonderful building, the height of the column, supposed to exceed that of any other in the world, its amazing strength, the richness of the materials, and the magnificence and variety of its embellishments, combine to render it the surpassing wonder of a land abounding in buildings of the highest degree of splendour and interest. The extraordinary elegance and grandeur of this remarkable tower have preserved it from the ruin with which it has been lately threatened; the Government, anxious to preserve so valuable a relic of Indian antiquity, directed its restoration and repair,—a difficult and somewhat hazardous work, which has been admirably performed by Major Smith, of the Engineers. From the summit, which is ascended by a spiral staircase, the view is of the most sublime description; a desert, covered with ruins full of awful beauty, surrounds it on all sides, watered by the snake-like Jumna, which winds its huge silvery folds along the crumbling remains of palaces and tombs. In the back-ground rises the dark

lofty walls and frowning towers of an ancient fortress, the strong-hold of the Pytaun chiefs; and the eye, wandering over the stupendous and still beautiful fragments of former grandeur, rests at last upon the white and glittering mosques and minarets of the modern city, closing in the distance, and finely contrasting, by its luxuriant groves and richly flowering gardens, with the loneliness and desolation of the scene beneath. The tomb of the emperor Humayoon, the father of Acbar, a monarch pre-eminent in misfortune, but of whom some fine chivalric tales are told, stands at a short distance from the Kootab Minar; there are other mausoleums also of great beauty and splendour, amid which that of Sufter Jung, a fortunate military adventurer, is worthy of mention.

Another place of great interest in the neighbourhood is a gigantic astronomical observatory, supposed to be the work of Jey Sing, a Hindoo rajah, who flourished in the seventeenth century. The dial is still in good repair, a stupendous work, of which the gnomon, of solid masonry, is sixty feet high. It is not possible to convey any idea by description of these enormous instruments; but persons desirous to make themselves acquainted with them have only to consult the splendid and accurate views taken by Mr. Daniell.

The Pytaun fortress, which forms so conspicuous an object from every terrace in the neighbourhood, constitutes another of the lions of old Delhi; the lapse of seven hundred years has done little towards the reduction of the solid walls and massive towers of this fine old place, which is now chiefly celebrated for its tank or *bowlee*, embosomed within high picturesque

buildings, which rise from twenty to sixty feet above the surface of the water,—a place of delightful coolness in the hot season, the sun not shining upon it for more than three hours a-day. It is deep as well as dark, and in the cold weather immersion cannot be very agreeable ; yet the idle parties of young men who frequent the spot, take perhaps greater delight in the exploits of a few poor creatures, who pick up a precarious subsistence by plunging into the flashing waters, than in more legitimate objects of interest. Some of these will venture, for the sake of a rupee, from a very perilous height, springing from the dome of a neighbouring mosque down to the abyss below, sixty or seventy feet, and disappearing frightfully, the waters resuming their tranquillity before these desperate adventurers can rise again to the surface. Of course, amongst Europeans, there will always be persons sufficiently inhuman to encourage these barbarous feats. The few intellectual pilgrims, who wander amidst the wrecks of bygone splendour, must make up their minds to endure sights and scenes of the most incongruous nature:—pic-nic parties bivouacking in the tombs, and being entertained at their repasts by the performances of a set of *nautch* girls ; young men amusing themselves with a game of quoits ; and groups of flirting unimagivative women, speculating on the probabilities of getting up a quadrille.

CHAPTER XI.

HURDWAR AND JUGGURNAUT.

THESE celebrated places of Hindoo pilgrimage are, at peculiar periods of the year, highly attractive to European visitors, more particularly Hurdwar, which lies almost in the route of those who are travelling to or from the Himalaya; and which possesses, in addition to its other claims to notice, picturesque beauties which can scarcely be surpassed. It is at this hallowed spot that the sacred river, emerging from its mountain birthplace, enters upon the wide plains of Hindostan, a clear, beautiful, but rather shallow stream, and though somewhat rapid, affording, at the period of the annual fair, no indications of the fury and velocity with which, during the rains, it pursues its headlong course until it meets the sea.

The town of Hurdwar, which is distinguished by a handsome range of buildings, backing an esplanade which runs along the bank of the river, occupies ground only partially cleared from the neighbouring forest. The deep and dense woods of the terrae sweep down to the western suburb, uniting their verdant avenues to the arched gateways and pillared colonnades of the streets. The pass, or gorge, leading to the valley of the Dhoon, presents landscapes of almost incomparable beauty, while the splendid piles

of mountains, rising in the back-ground, give a wild sublimity to the scene, which can scarcely fail to inspire with enthusiastic delight every breast not entirely indifferent to nature's wonders. We know not whether the fine bursts of scenery, which greet the eye at every point, have any part in the attachment manifested by the pilgrims to Hurdwar; the natives in general, and more particularly the lower classes, are singularly deficient in their perceptions of inanimate beauty; indeed, it is doubtful whether they are much attracted by loveliness in any form, or whether they do not, either in their wisdom, or their want of relish for the poetry of life, always prefer the *utilis* to the *dulcis*. A tree to them is chiefly, if not entirely, valuable for its shade; a stream is associated solely with the pleasure of quenching the thirst, and cooling the parched brow; and if a wife be docile, and fully equal to her household duties, it matters little what her claims to beauty may be. Yet, though more than ordinarily free from poetical influences, some portion of the rapturous delight with which the Hindoo devotees hail the first sight of the Ganges, as it issues forth from the Alpine solitudes beyond Hurdwar, must be attributed to the enchantment produced upon the eye by the loveliness of the combinations of hill, and wood, and gushing river. Shouts of "*Mahadeo Bol!*" of "*Bol! Bol!*" and "*Ram! Ram!*" rend the skies, as the worshippers of the sacred waters approach the place of their pilgrimage. The road is covered for miles with travelling parties; rich, poor, of both sexes and all ages, crowd to this oriental carnival, and there is scarcely any part

of Asia which does not send forth a deputation ; the commercial speculations and traffic, incidental to the fair, being quite as attractive to the worldly-minded, as purification to the devotee.

In former times, the meeting of so vast a multitude was productive of many hostile collisions. The rage of different sects was excited against each other, and quarrels were followed up by blows and bloodshed. The accounts given by the few European spectators who, before the occupation of the country by the British Government, chanced to visit the strange and wondrous scene, were absolutely terrific. At that time, holy mendicants, and men who could command bands of armed retainers, tyrannized over less fortunate persons ; while professional robbers openly pursued their calling, plundering with impunity those who were unable to defend themselves. Affairs now wear a much more peaceable aspect, and the order and tranquillity which prevails reflects the greatest credit upon the civil and military authorities, upon whom the task of maintaining harmony amidst such jarring materials devolves.

All weapons brought by the visitors are delivered up to the care of *chuprassies* appointed by the judge or magistrate to receive them ; a ticket is given to the owner, which, upon presenting on his return home, enables him to receive his property again. An island in the centre of the river is garrisoned for the period of the fair by several hundred men belonging to the Sirmoor battalion of Hill Rangers, whose usual quarters are at Deyrah Doon. These men are employed to

keep the peace, and they have hitherto succeeded most wonderfully.

The town of Hurdwar does not afford accommodation for a tenth part of the numbers who crowd to its ghauts; but Asiatics are independent of lodging-rooms; the rich carry their canvas dwellings along with them, and the poor are contented with the shelter of a tree. The country round about is formed into one vast camp, in which Arabs, Cingalese, Persians, Tartars, mingle with Seiks, people from Cutch, Guzerat, Nepaul, and all other provinces of India; while, a little removed from the din and clamour of this Babel-like assemblage, are to be seen the tents of European visitants, ladies, who venture fearlessly into the hubbub, sitting as much at their ease as the dust, the myriads of flies, and the intolerable clamour, will admit.

To give some idea of the valuable nature of the articles brought to Hurdwar for sale, it may be interesting to state, that a necklace consisting of a row of alternate diamonds and emeralds was valued at five thousand pounds; for another composed of splendid pearls, a fifth part of that sum was demanded; and those of wrought gold were from thirty to fifty pounds each. All sorts of brazen vessels are exposed for sale, and a great variety of idols of the same metal, which, previous to being consecrated, may be purchased by the pound. After Brahmins have shed the odour of sanctity upon them they increase prodigiously in price; persons, therefore, who only buy out of curiosity, should content themselves with the

least valuable article. Inferior trinkets, in the shape of beads, necklaces, bangles, armlets, and anklets of silver or of baser metal abound, together with real and mock coral, tinsel, and glass. There are mouth-pieces for pips, of lapis lazuli, agate, cornelian, and different kinds of marbles, and toys in ivory, stone, and mother-o'-pearl. Rosaries and Brahminical cords in great abundance, with preserved skins of wild animals, and stuffed birds. Truffles are brought from the countries north of the Sutledge. The sherbets are the finest in the world, but the manufacture and the consumption of sweetmeats almost exceed belief. Every fourth shop at Hurdwar is a confectioner's, and the process of making and baking goes on at all hours of the day and night.

The fairs of India differ in many particulars from those of Europe; though jugglers and tumblers are to be found, together with snake-charmers, and others who procure their subsistence by the exhibition of sleight-of-hand or tricks of cunning, there are, properly speaking, none of the shews which attract so much attention at home. The articles intended for sale are arranged with more regard to convenience than taste, either strewed promiscuously upon the ground, or hidden in the tents; the various wild animals, which form a part of the merchant's speculations, are openly exposed to public view, and, though gazed at with wonder and amazement by strangers from distant lands, are not rendered more profitable by being exhibited for money. The passion for sight-seeing may be equally strong in India as in England, but it is chiefly confined to the pageants displayed

at festivals, and as yet, curiosity has not been much excited by the wonders of nature. The cattle-department, at the fair of Hurdwar, is the most attractive, both to Europeans and natives, being considered the best in India; horses are brought from Kattiawar, Cutch, the countries north of the Sutledge river, Persia, and the shores of the Red sea, perfect in blood and bone, proud in their bearing, swift as the wind, and suited to warriors and cavaliers: these fine animals are contrasted with a race less showy, but equally useful, the small compact and sturdy breeds of Cashmere and Cabul, and the mountain ghoomts, of which M. Jacquemont has lately made such honourable mention. Elephants also rear their gigantic forms in the encamping-grounds of the dealers. Like the horse, they are distinguished by their good points: the tusks should be perfect, and they are greatly esteemed when the tail is of the orthodox dimensions, and furnished with a flat tuft of hair at its extremity.

The difference of appearance between an elephant destined for the pad, or as the caparisoned bearer of princes and nobles, is very great, but will bear no comparison with that which is displayed in the camel. At Hurdwar, every description of this animal may be seen, from the uncomfortable-looking, dejected beast of burthen, to the thorough-bred *hircarrah*, which can maintain its speed during a hundred miles without pause or rest: a winged messenger, which none but the best trained and hardiest of riders can venture to mount. For a very long period, the camel and the dromedary were supposed to be distinct animals, but modern naturalists have decided that

there is in reality no difference between them, the single and double-humped being merely a variety, and the fleetness and intelligence of both depending upon early education. Buffalos, cows, and sheep, are likewise exhibited for sale, the list of domestic animals closing with dogs and cats, the beautiful races of Persia, so much sought after in India, making their appearance by the side of some huge elephant. Monkeys, which may be said to occupy a sort of debateable ground between the wild beasts of the field and the quadrupeds which man has enlisted into his service, are brought in great numbers to Hurdwar; bears, leopards, and cheetas are likewise numerous, and deer of every kind, from the stately nylghau, to that diminutive species which can be so rarely preserved in a state of captivity, even in India, are purchasable: the yak is also sometimes to be found at Hurdwar, though the advance of the season renders their appearance rare, since they are unable to bear the heat of the plains. The most valuable articles of commerce procurable at this fair, are the gems and precious stones of all descriptions which lapidaries bring from every part of Asia; the shawls and cloths from Cashmere and Thibet rank next; the same dealer may also have a stock of English woollens upon hand; and perfumery and *bijouterie* of every kind from London and Paris, find their way to this remote market.

In former remarks upon the subject of the extraordinary low prices at which European goods are sold by native dealers, and the consequent losses sustained by speculations made at a venture, I have

mentioned the heterogenoeus mixture of articles in the possession of Indian venders, and their extreme ignorance of the intrinsic value of each. Many of the investments sent out to India, are utterly useless to the great bulk of the population ; and so little have the climate, habits, and wants of the people been studied by European traders, that cargoes of Irish butter have been despatched to Calcutta, and, as a matter of course, nothing but the casks remained at the end of the voyage, the contents having exuded at every crack. It was at one time thought by the worthies of Glasgow, that the natives of India would gladly exchange their muslin turbans for a covering of felt ; and accordingly a ship was freighted with round hats, articles only prized by the *topee wallahs* (hat fellows), the term commonly used to designate Europeans.

I do not know whether the information upon this important subject, communicated in the Madras and Calcutta papers, has travelled to England, but in speaking of the commodities which are to be met with at Hurdwar, it will not be out of place to mention those which would be most likely to find purchasers at fair prices. In the cutlery department, there should be scissors, pen-knives, and razors ; next, common padlocks and cheap locks of every description. Red and blue broadcloth, and serge, with woollen caps, such as sailors wear, sell well. In cotton and silk, care should be taken to select articles which would make up readily into turbans and *sarees* ; the former should be white, scarlet, or crimson, plain or flowered, twenty yards long by twelve inches ; cloths for the

duputtee six yards long and one and a-half broad, plain or white, or those with coloured borders, which are much in request ; also chintzes of gaudy patterns, which, as the fashions in India are unchangeable, would secure a constant sale. Stationery is in considerable demand, but it should consist of very cheap paper, both foolscap and post, French and Italian, it is said, answering best, in consequence of the low price at which they are manufactured ; quills, red wafers, and black-lead pencils, complete the list in this department. The catalogue of English books is rather amusing ; in addition to school dictionaries (that of Mylius and that by Fulton and Knight being recommended) ; Murray's Grammar, Spelling Book, and English Reader. The list contains an abridgment of the *Spectator*, *Arabian Nights*, *Chesterfield's Letters*, whole or abridged ; English Dialogues, the *Young Man's Best Companion*, and the *Universal Letter Writer*. These are eagerly sought after, but as yet, as far as regards the generality of Indian students, the remaining portion of English literature has been written in vain, and will not find native purchasers beyond the presidencies.

Watches of silver or yellow metal, costing from thirty shillings to five pounds, are greatly in demand ; also good spectacles, in cheap mountings of silver or metal, plated-ware not finding a ready sale in India ; small mirrors in plain frames, and lanthorns of a common sort, fitted up with lamps for oil. Patterns of hardware manufactory should be procured from India, for the natives will not eat or drink out of new-fangled utensils, however convenient they may be ; plates,

dishes, basins, and bowls, of iron, copper, and tin, should be fashioned after a peculiar manner ; as also the *lota*, or jug, from which, if an unpractised European were to attempt to drink, he would inevitably spill every drop of the liquor. In medicine there is an incessant demand for the following articles : bark-powder and quinine, jalap and cream of tartar, essence of peppermint, brandy disguised as a medicine, eau de Cologne, lavender-water, and strong sweet water, such as eau de mille fleurs. This list will appear very scanty, but the gentleman who furnished it assures us that it will not be expedient to add anything to it for the purpose of supplying the wants of the interior ; he caused it to be examined and corrected by several opulent and respectable natives, who were well acquainted with the actual state of the country, and with what would be most likely to sell amidst the great mass of the people ; many of the most respectable classes being poor, and content with the commonest conveniences of life.

The anxiety to promote the interests of commerce will excuse the insertion of the concluding paragraph of this interesting article upon the subject of India trade : * “ One point, however, must not be forgotten ; most invoices are sold at Madras, where the prices maintained are very moderate. They seldom reach the interior, where a better price would be easily found, and when carried up the country by hawkers and petty dealers, the price becomes exorbitant. To

* First published at Madras, and copied into the Calcutta newspapers.

obviate these inconveniences, the exporter should provide cases containing small miscellaneous invoices, *made up in England*, and these should be landed at various parts of the coast, so as to be conveyed straight to the best markets ; as, for instance, Tanjore, Madura, Trichinopoly, Nagpore, Seringapatam, or Hyderabad. At these places and many more (the names of which will be gradually ascertained by the merchant), a ready-money price will be immediately obtained ; the cost of inland carriage will not average more than two per cent. on the prime cost, while the profits will be from one hundred to three hundred per cent."

The English visitors at Hurdwar are made to smile at the base uses to which the refinements of European luxury are degraded ; nothing appears to be employed for the precise purpose for which it was originally intended ; table-covers of woollen with printed borders, black and crimson, or yellow and blue, figure upon the shoulders of the poorer classes, who have purchased them for next to nothing, tables being at present unknown in the houses of the natives, while prints are offered for sale upside down, and hung up in the same manner when purchased. A taste for the fine arts is still a desideratum in India, and, from personal experience of the difficulty of explaining the most obvious pictorial subject to an uneducated native, the probability of conveying instruction through the medium of paintings seems very questionable.

There is, of course, nothing like neatness or order in the arrangement of the stalls of the merchants at Hurdwar: Each strives to make the merits of his commodities known by clamorous commendations. It

is necessary to be a good judge of every article, to avoid being taken in, and to be tolerably expert at driving a bargain; the venders demanding exorbitant sums, which they lower gradually when convinced that they have no chance of succeeding in obtaining more than a tenth part. The art of selling a horse is well understood in India, and persons ought to be well acquainted with the secrets of the trade to deal with such experienced jockeys. The dexterity with which they shew off the animal's accomplishments, and the extraordinary degree of training and doctoring which they undergo, deceive the inexperienced and the presumptuous youths, who fancy that they may credit the evidence of their senses. An incorrigibly vicious beast, which nothing but a native of the Pampas could ride, is drugged with opium until he appears to be of lamb-like gentleness; while stimulants are administered to the weak and sluggish, which give them a temporary shew of vigour and activity. Some of the finest Arabs bear very high prices; the principal merchant, during the writer's residence in India, asked £800 for a beautiful milk-white charger, and could not be induced to take a smaller sum; the price of a good camel is £8, but the sums given for elephants vary as much as those at which horses are sold.

The waters of the Ganges are supposed to derive additional sanctity at the expiration of every twelfth year, and the concourse of pilgrims is much greater upon these anniversaries. The astronomers in attendance calculate the precise moment in which ablution is supposed to be particularly beneficial, and, at the sounding of the Brahminical shell, the anxious crowds

precipitate themselves into the water. In consequence of the narrowness of the principal ghaut, this simultaneous rush was formerly attended with great danger, and frequently with loss of life. A dreadful concussion, in which numbers perished, determined the British Government to remedy the evil ; a more commodious passage to the river was constructed, and the returning pilgrims, when they saw the preparations made to secure their safety, mingled shouts and blessings upon their humane benefactors, with their acclamations to Mahadeva. The liveliness with which the Hindoos express their gratitude, and their quick sensibility to kindness and attention to their convenience and comfort, seem incompatible with the apathetic temperament manifested upon many occasions. The prejudices of caste, and the influence of predestinarianism, which render them indifferent to suffering, are the causes of this inconsistency, and so great is their effect, that it is difficult to imagine that one and the same person could display such contrary feelings, so much coldness and torpor at one period, and so much emotion and vivacity at another. At Hurdwar, all the enthusiastic elements of the native character are called into action ; the pilgrims and merchants are lively and energetic beyond the sober conceptions of the English spectators, who look on half-stupified by the clamour, and all astonishment at the power of the human lungs, exhibited in a manner almost exceeding belief. The noises incidental to a crowded Indian assemblage have been too often described to need repetition ; but they are so supereminently astounding at Hurdwar, that no account

of the ordinary din and dissonance can afford the faintest notion of the uproar which prevails. The ringing of bells, the firing of cannon, and the loud huzzas of European multitudes, however deafening, are nothing to the wild and continuous discord which assails the ear at this meeting. The bawling and drumming of the *fakirs* never appear to cease during a single instant; then, in addition to the most horrid blasts the direst trumpet ever blew, we have the Brahminical shell, the *nobut*, the *dhole*, and the *gong*. The animals, terrified by the confusion around them, neigh, bellow, grunt, and roar, with more than usual vehemence, and this tumult continues, night and day, without the slightest interval of peace. The instant that the voice of a *jogee* or other devotee fails, he applies himself to his bell, ringing with astounding clamour, until the lungs can come into play again.

The only ceremonial used by the bathers is that of ablution, which consists merely in dipping in the Ganges, and in paying the tribute, collected carefully by the attendant Brahmins. Those who are desirous of securing a large share of the good things of this and of the next world, are proportionably liberal to the religious mendicants, who form the most conspicuous figures in the scene. The more dreadfully degraded from the dignity of men, the more filthy, squalid, and indecent in their appearance, the higher is the veneration with which these *fakirs* are regarded. Though sufficiently numerous in other places, they repair in troops to Hurdwar, occupying the verandahs, galleries, and roofs of the principal buildings, and stages of bamboo erected for their accommodation in the centre of

the stream, superintending the devotions of the bathers, which are however, generally speaking, confined to manifestations of joy at having obtained the end and object of a long and toilsome pilgrimage. The latest accounts from India state that the fair at Hurdwar is upon the decline, and that many of the Brahmins, who were formerly attached to its temples, have taken service under Europeans. By some, this falling off in religious enthusiasm is attributed to the conviction (mainly produced by the subjection of Bhurtpore), that it is impossible to withstand the power of the Christians, who will sooner or later induce all India to conform to their creed, and this idea has doubtless considerable weight with a superstitious people. But, however, in remarking upon the lukewarmness observable, all over Hindostan, towards festivals formerly exciting the highest degree of reverential regard, the labours of the missionaries must not be wholly overlooked and forgotten.

Since the period in which the English first obtained a footing in India, the efforts of these zealous disciples have been unremitting; they are always to be found in large and promiscuous assemblies, standing at the ghauts, or sitting in the porches of the temples, distributing tracts to the passers-by, and expounding the Scriptures to such as will listen to them. Not discouraged by their apparent want of success, they have continued to exercise the duties of their calling with untiring activity, and we should do great injustice to the intellectual powers of many of the classes of the natives, if we did not suppose that the perusal of such portions of the Holy Writings as have been placed for the purpose in their hands, has not had the effect of

disturbing their belief in the monstrous fallacies of the Hindoo religion. Captain Skinner assures us that the Sikhs, in particular, evinced the greatest anxiety to possess themselves of the tracts offered to them by a missionary at the fair of Hurdwar. "I stood," observes the above-mentioned authority, "near the spot where he was sitting, without, I believe, being perceived by him, and was astonished at the attention which they all paid to the few words which he was able to address to them. A middle-aged man, with several of his family about him, came up to me with his book, and repeated the words the '*Padre Sahib*' had spoken to him on presenting it, and as if really anxious to have them corroborated, asked with much earnestness if it were true—'*Sach bat?*' I assured him it all was ;—'Then,' said he, 'I will read the book to my family when I get home.' "

The new *ghaut* is exceedingly wide and handsome, not less than a hundred feet in breadth, and descending by a fine flight of about sixty steps into the water ; it is covered at every hour of the day with multitudes of bathers, ascending and descending, and uttering *Wah ! wah !* as they contrast the present facilities with the former difficulties of the approach.

The annual fair at Hurdwar affords abundant opportunities for the exercise of dacoity ; it is here that the highest dexterity in the art of thieving is displayed. It is said that, like the vampire-bat, which lulls its victim to sleep by gently fanning him with its wings while it sucks the vital current from his veins, these accomplished marauders employ some soothing art which deepens the repose of the slumberer, while they possess themselves of every article belonging to

him, even to the very sheet on which he may be lying; stripped to the skin, and their bodies rubbed with oil, no snake can be more smooth and supple, or more quiet in its movements. They will glide into a tent, in spite of the utmost watchfulness of the sentinel appointed to guard it; and so impossible is it to prevent the entrance of such intruders, that the only method to preserve the property is to keep it all upon the outside, under the charge of the sentry, who must neither slumber upon his post nor stir for a single instant from the spot.

At all periods of the year, the *ghauts* at Hurdwar are frequented by pilgrims; but they are few in number compared to the tide which rushes down the mountain gorge and along the lower plains at the anniversary of the fair.

This concourse is often very considerably increased by the visits of persons having little save curiosity for their object. At one anniversary the Begum Sumroo was present, with the attendance of a thousand horse, and fifteen hundred infantry. Mahomedan princes frequently come in great force, and the European spectators sometimes amount to three hundred. Upon such occasions the encampments of the visitors are usually fixed at some distance in the neighbourhood, the town and immediate environs of Hurdwar affording scanty accommodation for the pilgrims. Kunkul, where there is a large open plain, which is situated at only two miles distance, is more convenient, and the greater proportion of Europeans pitch their tents at that place. Hindoo ladies of high rank, when desiring to bathe in the Ganges at Hurdwar, are con-

veyed into the river in large covered litters, which completely conceal them from the gaze of the multitude. The advantages obtained by the pilgrims are supposed to be in proportion to the number of immersions ; but as every plunge into the water must be accompanied by a donation to the priests in attendance, it is only the rich who can obtain any material benefit from these ablutions.

Very different from Hurdwar is the aspect of Juggurnaut. This celebrated temple is erected upon the sea-coast of Orissa, in the district of Cuttack, the first Indian land which the passengers of a ship sailing direct from England to Calcutta espy. The dark and frowning pagoda, rising abruptly from a ridge of sand, forms a conspicuous object from the sea, its huge and shapeless mass not unlike some ill-proportioned giant, affording a gloomy type of the hideous superstitions of the land. While gazing on this mighty Moloch the mind is impressed with a strange awe ; the bright and golden sunshine above, and the waving foliage below, only serve to deepen its horrors ; it looks like a foul blot upon the fair face of nature, a frightful monument of man's success in marring the designs of his Creator. At Hurdwar, it is not only very possible to sympathize in the feelings of the multitudes, whose adoration is called forth by the bright river, one of the greatest blessings which the Almighty has bestowed upon the burning soil, but to go even farther, and lift up our thoughts, amidst the most beautiful scenes of nature, unto nature's God. At Juggurnaut, there is nothing save unalloyed horror. Frightful idols inclosed in an equally frightful shrine, and

seeming when viewed from the land to be surrounded by a waste of sand-hills, revolt the mind, and give to superstition its most disgusting aspect; and the disagreeable impression, which a distant prospect excites, is increased upon a nearer approach to a scene associated with all that is most fearful and disgusting in religious error. Every known rule of architecture being set at defiance, it would be difficult, without the aid of the pencil, to convey any idea of the half-tower, half-pyramidal style of the great pagoda; it is built of a coarse red granite brought from the southern parts of Cuttack, and covered with a rough coating of *chunam*. The tower containing the idols, which is two hundred feet high, and serves as a land-mark to the mariner, stands in the centre of a quadrangle, enclosed by a high stone-wall, extending six hundred and fifty feet on each side, and surrounded by minor edifices of nondescript shapes.

The magnitude of these buildings forms their sole claim to admiration; they are profusely decorated with sculpture, but so rudely carved as to afford no pleasure to the eye, the only object worthy of praise being a pillar of black stone, beautifully proportioned and finely designed, which has been brought from the black pagoda in the neighbourhood, and placed in front of the principal entrance. The outer gateway and the great portal of the temple are ascended by broad flights of steps, and the interior is described as being very curious and well worthy of inspection, a sight which, however, is very rarely enjoyed by Europeans. The Brahmins in attendance take care to exclude all profane footsteps; but it is said, upon the

authority of Major Archer, that a young officer of a native corps, a peculiar favourite with the sepoy's under his command, was at one time smuggled into the sanctuary by the connivance of the soldiers, who dyed his skin of the proper hue, dressed him in full costume, and painting the peculiar marks of their caste upon his forehead and nose, crowded round him upon all sides, and, thus secured from detection, brought him into the very presence of the idol. A distant view, notwithstanding the zeal of his conductors, was all that he obtained ; and either there not being a great deal to attract his attention, or a sense of danger preventing him from feeling sufficiently at his ease to make many observations, the information acquired from his account was very scanty ; he told his friends that he saw nothing but large courts and apartments for the priests.

The festival of the *Rath Jatra* takes place every year ; but, as at Hurdwar, it increases in sanctity at peculiar periods, every third, sixth, and twelfth anniversary, the latter more particularly, being considered of greater importance than those that intervene. The concourse of pilgrims is still exceedingly large, and numbers, as in former times, never return, leaving their bodies to fester on the neighbouring sands, victims to a horrible superstition, though not, as heretofore, sacrificed under the suicidal wheels of the cruel idol's car. Such immolations are becoming very unfrequent ; but fatigue, hardship, want of food, and the various diseases brought on by exposure to the pestilential atmosphere of the rains, make fearful havoc among the miserable wretches who hasten

onwards to the holy precincts of the temple, in the hope of obtaining a panacea for all their woes.

A favourite method of approach to Juggurnaut, by those who have either great offences to expiate, or who are desirous of obtaining a more than ordinary portion of beatitude, is to measure the length the whole way from some extraordinary distance. The pilgrim lies down, marks the spot which the extremity of his hands have touched, and rising rests his feet upon the spot, and, again prostrating himself, repeats the same process. Five years are sometimes consumed in this manner, and, as the penance may be performed by proxy, it is often volunteered for a certain sum of money, the wages being most scrupulously earned by the person who undertakes the duty. In no part of the world is gold so all-powerful as in India; upon the morning of an intended execution, a stranger appeared in the place of the criminal, and declaring that he had for a certain consideration agreed to suffer for the person who had made the bargain, seemed quite astonished to find any hesitation on the part of the authorities to execute the sentence, remonstrating with them upon the folly of their scruples, since he was ready and willing to perform his part. Fortunately for him, he had not to deal with his own countrymen, who, provided that somebody died, would have cared very little whether it was the offender or his substitute.*

The great temple of Juggurnaut was erected in the twelfth century, under the auspices of the chief mi-

* Such substitutions are not uncommon in China.

nister of the rajah of the district. The idols have nothing to distinguish them save their size and their deformity ; the principal one, Krishna, is intended as a mystic representation of the supreme power,—for the Hindoos are unanimous in declaring that they worship only one god, and that the images, which they exhibit and to which they pay the most reverential homage, are merely attributes of a deity pervading the whole of nature ;—he is associated with the two other personages of the Hindoo triad, and every one of the idols particularly venerated by the numerous tribes and sects of Hindostan, obtains a shrine within the precincts of this huge temple, so that all castes may unite in celebrating the great festival with one accord. The installation of the great idol upon his car, or *rath*, and the procession attendant upon his triumphal march to a country residence about a mile and a-half distant, a journey which occupies three days, are performed with many ceremonies, though not all of a very respectful nature. Previous to this grand ovation, the images are taken from their altars to be bathed, and are then exhibited to public view upon an elevated terrace.

These gigantic busts, hideously ugly, and scarcely bearing the rudest lineaments of the human form, are seen mounted upon pedestals, the latter being concealed by muffling draperies. The hands, feet, and ears of the great idol are of gold, but these are kept in a box by themselves, and are only fastened into their sockets after Juggurnaut has been safely deposited upon his car. While seated in state upon the terrace, a canopy, gay with cloths of various

colours, is raised over the heads of the triad, and crowds of Brahmins are in attendance with *punkahs* and *chowries*, to beat off the flies. Occasionally, the sudden flash of a vivid fire-work sheds a momentary ray upon the horrid countenances of these Dagon, and in the next instant all is again involved in the indistinct gloom of an eastern twilight dimly revealing the huge forms of the idols, and the eager gesticulations of their misguided votaries. The unwieldiness of Juggurnaut and his companions, and the absence of the machinery necessary to effect their removal in a proper and decorous manner, occasions a scene which scandalizes European eyes, but which the natives, accustomed to the doctrine of expediency, survey without feeling that they are offering any indignity to the objects of their worship. The only method of transport which has been yet devised, is by means of ropes fastened round the necks and feet of these cumbrous images, which are thus dragged from their high places down the steps, and through the gateways of the temple, and are afterwards hauled up in the same manner upon the *raths*, without regard to mud or dust.

The car of Juggurnaut is a monstrous vehicle, gigantic in its dimensions, and associated in the mind with images of horror; it is a sort of platform, forty-three feet in height and thirty-five feet square, moving upon sixteen wheels, each six feet and a half in diameter: the ornaments with which it is decorated are by no means splendid, its principal attraction being a covering of striped and spangled broad-cloth. The villagers of the neighbouring *pergunnahs* have their

fields rent-free upon the condition of attendance at the cars of the idols. This duty, at present esteemed a privilege, is not exclusively confined to those who are so well rewarded for its performance ; but, before the whole ceremony concludes, the zeal of many of the devotees is so completely exhausted, that the *raths* would scarcely reach their destination were it not for the services which the Brahmins can command. It takes fifteen hundred men to put each of the cars of Juggurnaut in motion, and, when the idols are fairly established in their places, the shouts and cries of the frenzied multitude are such as to lead us to fancy that the whole of Pandemonium had been let loose, an idea which is strengthened by the fiend-like figures of the Jogies, Gosseins, and other religious mendicants, whose grim visages, lighted up with a frantic joy, give them a super-human appearance, as they cheer on their insane followers to acts of horror. Though the ponderous wheels of Juggurnaut no longer go crushing over the bodies of prostrate victims, the fury and excitement with which the assembled crowd rush to the car is absolutely appalling. In places of very inferior note, there is something frightful in the noisy lumbering progress of the cumbrous *rath*, surmounted by a hideous idol, dragged about in honour of the festival ; but in the very heart and centre of this abominable superstition, the celebration becomes perfectly terrific, and the senses, overwrought, faint and sicken at the view. The scenery of the place, its bare sands, the surging of the ocean in the distance, the drenching rains, damp gales, and sudden tempests of the fitful atmosphere, add to the wild horrors of this awful

pageant. Each day the exhibition becomes more ghastly, as the wan victims of famine and disease drop exhausted around, making a golgotha of the unhallowed precincts.

The most sacred portion of the soil round the temple of Juggurnaut extends to a circle of about eight miles, though the land is considered holy to a much greater distance ; and the whole, during sickly seasons, may be said to be covered with the dead bodies of the pilgrims, who, unequal to encounter exposure to the inclemency of the weather, sink under accumulated hardships, to form a frightful banquet for carrion-birds and beasts of prey. Most authorities agree that the tax, which was levied by the Government upon the pilgrims to Juggurnaut, here as well as at Allahabad, tended to diminish the number of persons resorting to the festival, and also the amount of suicides. Still a good deal of scandal was excited by the support of an establishment, by Christian rulers, of a stud of elephants, horses, and other equipments for the service of the idol ; and the annual waste of life, though not occasioned by actual offerings to the blood-stained wheels of the demoniacal car, is nearly equally shocking, as the result of one of the most frightful delusions that ever spread its curse upon the human race !

The country about Juggurnaut consists of low sand-hills covered by a thick, but not tall, forest of trees, the gigantic vegetable products of the soil not being found so near the coast : about a mile from the sea, cultivation abruptly ceases, the intervening space being a waste of deep and loose sand, extending along the desolate shore.

The town of Pooree is situated upon the margin of this desert ; but the European cantonments, with greater regard to comfort and convenience than picturesque beauty, occupy a high ridge, which is perfectly destitute of verdure, fronting the sea, and having the benefit of all its cooling breezes. Pooree is, in consequence, notwithstanding its desolate appearance and its isolated situation, a desirable quarter ; *punkahs* are scarcely necessary at any period of the year ; and, worn out by the oppressive heat of Bengal and Hindostan, many are delighted to loiter away the time on the health-inspiring, though solitary, shores of Cuttack. The beach is destitute of shells, or of any marine production interesting to the naturalist ; the neighbouring sea, however, abounds in fish ; and oysters, crabs, and lobsters, which are never attainable at Calcutta in their freshest state, are taken with the greatest ease. They are not generally supposed to be equal in flavour to those found in England ; but this idea is in all probability more occasioned by the want of appetite, and consequent relish, of the sojourners of a tropical clime than any real inferiority on the part of the fish. During the monsoon the surf rises with great vehemence, presenting breakers equally formidable with those of Madras, and effectually preventing any thing, save boats of native construction, from holding communication with ships in the offing.

It sometimes happens that officers, who have nearly out-stayed the period permitted for absence in England, prevail upon the captains who bring them out to land them at Pooree, whence they can report their return to head-quarters long before the ship can reach its

destined port; and as at all times the European outward-bound appear within sight of the black pagoda, or the temple of Juggurnaut, and not unfrequently hold communication by signal with the harbour-master of Pooree, the inhabitants of the station look out with great anxiety for passing vessels, and derive their greatest enjoyment from the expectation of obtaining news from England before it can arrive at Calcutta.

The sand is ill-adapted either for walking or for riding, and in boisterous weather becomes so great a nuisance as more than to counterbalance the advantages of the sea-breeze. The houses are not built with the attention to comfort which characterizes those of the interior; they are more in the style of the primitive *bungalow*, pervious to every wind from heaven, and gritty in every quarter from the drifting sand. The interior parts of the district abound in game; but in the immediate neighbourhood of Pooree, the ardour of the most determined sportsman is soon quenched by the difficulties which surround him, and the worthlessness of the prizes which reward his toil. But while the mightiest hunter is obliged to remain inactive, a wide field is opened to the antiquary, who may spend the whole period of a protracted sojourn in examining and inquiring into the relics of Hindoo antiquities which are to be found in every part of the hallowed soil.

There are several pagodas, occupying a considerable tract of ground, scattered amongst the sand-hills which have heaped themselves along the coast. Many of these are protected from the encroachments of the drift by massy walls; but others, not having the same

facilities for keeping the space clear around them, are almost swallowed up in the sand. All are exceedingly picturesque in their appearance ; and their gaunt and withered inhabitants, only a little less infernal in their aspect than the deformed objects of their worship, sprawling on the floors, or grinning from a niche, combined with the dreariness of the land-scene, and the loud roar of the ever-sounding surf, altogether form a picture of wild sublimity, which leaves an indelible impression upon the mind.

The black pagoda, or temple of the sun, one of the most splendid Hindoo remains which India can boast, and which is an object of great attraction to all the intellectual visitants of Pooree, is situated about sixteen miles to the north of the native city, in the midst of a wilderness of sand, with which the jungle has struggled, not always unsuccessfully, for the ascendancy ; here and there patches of verdure make their appearance, and the gentle risings of the ground relieve the dull monotony of the adjacent plains. It is of much earlier antiquity than Juggurnaut, but has lost its sanctity in the eyes of the multitude, and is now deserted and left to ruin. The roof is pyramidal, rising from a square building of great solidity ; but owing to a defect in the architecture, a large portion of this massive edifice is in ruins, and it is somewhat difficult to comprehend its original design.

Weeds, the gigantic product of a most prolific soil, prickly pear, and copse-wood, have spread themselves over and amidst the enormous masses of recumbent ruins, above which the surviving portion of the temple rears itself, and from the summit of an artificial mound

bids defiance to the encroaching sand, and lifts its head proudly as a beacon to the wanderers of the wave. Those who have closely examined the numberless sculptures which adorn this once splendid temple, report them to be of exquisite beauty ; the choice of subject, however, in many must prevent them from being made better known by the aid of drawings ; but this unhappy taste does not pervade the whole edifice ; and some of the colossal remains, especially of elephants and griffins, are magnificent. Any attempt at minute description would occupy many pages, while it must utterly fail in conveying an adequate idea of the lonely majesty of this desecrated pile. A few *fakirs*, looking more like wood-demons than men, share the shelter afforded by the numerous cavernous chambers, with the porcupines and bears composing the principal population of the place ; tigers occasionally join the assembly, though the latter intruders, arousing the spirit of adventure in the youth of the neighbouring station, are speedily put to the rout.

The intolerance of the Mussulmans, and their determination to overthrow idolatry in the seat of their conquests, obliged the Brahmins of Juggurnaut, upon more than one occasion, to resort to stratagem for the preservation of their sacred images. Twice have they been carried away and hidden amongst fastnesses beyond the Chilka lake (a neck of the sea, about seventeen miles to the south of Pooree), and there enshrined until better times enabled them to return ; but even the servants of the Prophet, tired of the attempt to force their religion upon the still more bigotted followers of Brahma, came at length to a

compromise, and turned the object of their antipathy into a source of profit by instituting a tax, which was continued by the British Government. Formerly, the concourse of pilgrims was so great as to yield a revenue of nine lacs of rupees ; but the receipts have dwindled yearly, during a considerable period ; and the progress of civilization and of knowledge is now extending so rapidly, that at no very great distance of time we may hope that the fearful orgies celebrated at Juggurnaut may be looked upon as bygone things, and that a purer creed will be established upon the ruins of that monstrous fabric of superstition which has so long tyrannized over the mental faculties of the Indian world.

CHAPTER XII.

GOUR, MANDOO, AND BEJAPORE.

INDIA abounds in deserted cities,—vast extensive ruins, many of which may be described in the words of the prophet Isaiah, as peopled only with desolate creatures. One of the most remarkable is Gour, the ancient capital of Bengal. The remains of this once flourishing place are to be found in the district of Dinagepore, a few miles to the southward of Malda. Its decline and abandonment were caused by the desertion of the Ganges, which formerly flowed beside

its walls. About two hundred years ago, the course of the river took a new direction, turning off to a considerable distance from the place to which it had brought wealth and sanctity. To no part of the city, occupying a space of twenty square miles, does the Ganges now approach nearer than four miles and a-half, and places formerly navigable are now twelve miles from the stream, which so unaccountably and capriciously forsook its ancient bed, leaving behind it all the melancholy consequences of the alienation of a powerful ally.

There is something very poetical in the catastrophe of a city suffering under a fate which may be compared to the miseries resulting from human perfidy ; and never did the fellest of war's dire bloodhounds, fire, sword, pestilence, or famine, commit more fearful havoc than that which has silently and stealthily devastated a city, once so fair that it was styled by the Emperor Humaion, 'the abode of paradise.' The wild luxuriance of vegetation, which characterizes Bengal, has nearly choked up the magnificent remains of Gour : a beautiful lake, adorned with many islands, spread its crystal waters to the eastward of a strong fortress ; but both the lake and the citadel have vanished, and the splendours of the city can only be estimated by a few majestic remains of mosques, towers, and gateways, which still exist to shew how deeply it was indebted to architectural taste and skill. The buildings of Gour were very solidly constructed of brick and a stone which has been by many persons mistaken for marble, but which geologists pronounce to be hornblende ; vast quantities of the materials

have been carried away and sold for building in the neighbouring towns and villages, but there are still large masses of strong masonry scattered over the surface of the ground, which have been so completely covered with brushwood, and so intermixed with the gigantic roots of trees, forcing themselves through the rifts made by time and the elements, as more to resemble huge mounds of earth than the remains of human habitations.

The bricks with which Gour was built are remarkable for the solidity of their texture, the sharpness of their edges, and the smoothness of their surfaces,—characteristics which they have preserved through a series of ages, and which have rendered them a very marketable commodity. Many beautiful edifices have been destroyed without mercy, for the sake of the materials ; and it is only the most solid which have defied the ruthless assaults of the pick-axe and crow-bar. Here are also to be found great abundance of the coarse enamelling resembling Dutch tiles, which at one period was so commonly used in the building of India. The painted Mosque, so called on account of its gay colours, is profusely decorated with this glazing, and the tomb of Hussein Shah is faced with bricks beautifully carved, and glazed in blue and white.

The arch of the principal gateway, which in picturesque beauty can scarcely be surpassed, is upwards of fifty feet in height ; the wall is of correspondent thickness, and its massy strength promises to defy the ravages of time for centuries to come : it exhibits all the splendour of decoration common to the buildings of the Moslem conquerors in India, and perhaps no

scene in the world can be dignified with more solemn grandeur than that which is displayed in these noble remains, forming an entrance to the wildest and most desolate jungle imaginable. Amidst the reeds which encumber the soil, may be seen the dwindled relics of fruits and flowers, now wild, which in other days adorned luxuriant gardens: the palm-tree still flourishes, but the coarser vegetation of all kinds is too redundant. The circulation of air is impeded, the weeds are permitted to wither and decay upon the ground, and from these deposits, and from the swamps produced by neglected tanks, miasma is created, which threatens the visitor with disease and death. A few feeble attempts have been made to bring land, which Nature has rendered exuberantly fertile, under cultivation; but the patience of the supine Bengallee has been wearied. The most effectual processes, those of cutting down the brush-wood and burning the weeds, have been neglected, and, content with a bare subsistence obtained amidst clouds of tormenting insects, the foulest air, and the most noxious vermin, the neighbouring population neglect the sources of wealth and comfort which lie so invitingly before them. The tanks, long neglected, and rendered pestilential by the impurities of their stagnant waters, swarm with alligators, and cannot be approached without danger, notwithstanding the pious exertions of resident *faqueers*, who employ themselves in the unenviable task of taming these stupid and hideous monsters.

The success attending efforts, which perhaps would have been more advantageous to the community at

large if directed to the destruction of these formidable reptiles, shews that there is no nature so wholly brutish and cruel as not to be susceptible of improvement. The alligators of Gour have learned to distinguish the voice of kindness, and come readily to the call of those who have been at the pains of subduing their fierceness, taking a morsel of rice from the hands of their protectors, who, armed with the doctrine of fatalism, and totally indifferent to life, go fearlessly up to the very jaws which seem yawning for their destruction. In those parts of India most pregnant with distempers, and most dreadfully infested with savage animals, religious ascetics, both Mahomedan and Hindoo, are certain to be found. It is not easy to say whether these people are actuated by religious enthusiasm or wordly ambition; as long as they exist they excite an extraordinary degree of veneration, which perchance may reconcile them to a life of the most horrible privation; but, as they very often establish themselves in remote and almost inaccessible places, they can have very little enjoyment of the reputation for which they must make such sacrifices. Remorse, or worldly disappointment, are among the causes which induce the religious ascetics of India to fly to the jungle, and associate with the wild beasts of the field; but with many it is merely a profession,—a mode of life to which they are called by caste or descent. No sooner has a *faqueer* been devoured by the tiger, or other dangerous companion, to whose tender mercies he has trusted, than a successor is ready to take his place, willing to encounter the same danger, and to perish by the same catas-

trophe: in fact, the people of India think it but proper that some kinds of deaths should be hereditary in a family; those especially whose parents have been devoured by tigers, seek the same fortune, and few are known to desert places which have been peculiarly fatal to their relatives.

The extraordinary size and numbers of the alligators of Gour can be easily accounted for by the circumstances which are so particularly favourable to the growth of all descriptions of reptiles, the hot damp nature of the atmosphere, and the sliminess of the soil, the corruption and fermentation of vegetable matter, the fat weed left to rot in its own effluvia, and generating monsters; but alligators are numerous where these causes do not exist: tanks, which have been long dry, are no sooner filled with water from the periodical rains, than they are discovered to be peopled with reptiles, of which no trace had been previously seen. Persons unacquainted with the extraordinary precocity of the reptile tribe, imagine that these creatures must have found their way from distant waters; but they are in all probability hatched from eggs deposited in the neighbouring sand. The instant one of these amphibious monsters breaks its shell, it is perfectly competent to the care of its own subsistence; its first impulse is to seek for food, and if it escape the numerous enemies watching an opportunity to make a meal, before it is strong enough to resist them, its growth is so rapid as almost to exceed belief.

The boa-constrictor is an inhabitant of the wood-encumbered ruins of Gour, where it attains to a very

considerable size: one twenty-two feet long having been killed about the period of the visit made by Mr. Daniell, the artist, to whose pencil we are indebted for some striking delineations of this once celebrated place. Though still so close to the Ganges, few travellers have put themselves to the inconvenience of going a little out of their way to inspect the relics of a city possessing so many claims to notice. Several straggling villages are to be found upon the site, and there would not be much difficulty in converting the remains of eight bazaars, which are well placed for the purpose, into a flourishing town. Should the spirit of improvement reach the wealthy portion of the natives of India, they have a wide field before them; and, even as a vision of fancy, it is pleasing to imagine the swamps and wildernesses of Bengal, where the serpent broods, the tiger couches, and the wild boar whets his horrid tusks, converted into a smiling plain, shaded by the mango and the tamarind-tree, and peopled with innocent and happy creatures.

There are several buildings superior in beauty and elegance to anything of the kind to be found in the province of Bengal, which might still be preserved from farther decay. One of these, a minaret ninety feet in height and twenty-one feet in diameter at the base, is particularly striking. It is said to have been erected by Firoze Shah, one of the independent kings of Bengal, and as it stands in a part of the city which has been cleared of jungle, its beauties are not obscured by the too redundant growth of the forest, which has proved so inimical to many of its neighbours. A staircase in the interior leads to an

open cupola at the top, whence a grand and extensive view may be obtained of the adjacent country. Several gateways remain in tolerable preservation. Trees are springing from the *Soonna Musjid*, or golden mosque; but its lower story is almost entire, and displays great architectural beauty both in the design and the execution of the ornaments. The *Chota Soonna Musjid*, or small golden mosque, has suffered even less from the ravages of time, and presents one of those splendid interiors in which a series of arches, succeeding and crossing each other, delight the eye from every point of view by the play of light and shadow, and the richness and grandeur of the effect. Another mosque, not very materially injured by the numerous agencies which have been at work at Gour, has a great reputation for sanctity; it is named the Kadan Rasul, from a small stone deposited there bearing the impression of a human foot, believed by the pious to have been made by Mahommed himself. This stone, according to tradition, was brought from Medina many years ago. Surajah Dowlah, the Napoleon of his day, carried it off, but it was restored by Meer Jaffier. This mosque, in consequence of its containing so precious a relic, and boasting the shrine of a celebrated saint besides, is much visited by pilgrims, and therefore has not been suffered to go to ruin like those which have only picturesque beauty to recommend them. One alone, amid the bridges erected over the drains and canals which intersected the roads, have been spared by people who estimated the value of these ruins by what they would bring at market. Europeans have been guilty of this barbarity, some of

the works at Fort William having been constructed of stone taken from the tombs of the sovereigns of Gour. The city being in the road to Chirra Poonjee, a sanitarium lately established on the Siccim hills, and much frequented in the hot weather by visitors from Calcutta, Anglo-Indians have an opportunity of making the only amends in their power for former outrages, by preserving all that now exists in this once celebrated place.

As a city, Gour is perhaps past recall; we must be content to see the ploughshare driven over the halls of kings, and modern cottages constructed from the crumbling brickwork of ancient palaces; but there are other places which might still be snatched from impending destruction. Of these, Mandoo is one of the most interesting. Though, like Gour, vegetation has sprung up so thickly and strongly, as almost to overwhelm many of the buildings, the ruins of Mandoo have not so completely yielded to the evil influences to which they have been exposed, and the situation is much finer and more striking. Originally Hindoo, the residence of the Dhar Rajas, it afterwards became subject to the Patan government, and upon its capture by Acbar, who made himself master of all the Mahomedan states in his neighbourhood, it fell gradually into decay. Mandoo is built upon a large tract of table-land, upon the summit of a mountain belonging to the Vindhyan range, in the province of Malwa, and upon the occupation of this part of the country by the British, it was found to be a shelter for predatory tribes, the strong-hold of Bheels, who, after robbing and

slaughtering in the plains, returned to this solitary fastness, which then effectually secured them from pursuit.

Upon the occupation of Malwa and the neighbouring provinces by the British, the Bheels were deprived of this sanctuary ; but they have hitherto, at least the greater portion of them, continued to lead the lawless life to which their forefathers were so strongly attached, and there appears to be more difficulty in spreading civilization amongst them than we have found with any other class or tribe of native Indians. Sir John Malcolm, who has left an enviable name behind him, wheresoever his duties led him to sojourn, was more successful than those who have succeeded him, (perhaps in consequence of having more power and better opportunities,) in persuading these poor people to submit to the established authorities. Like Mr. Cleveland with the hill tribes of Bengal, he tried the power of kindness and confidence, placing trust in those, who, accustomed to be distrusted, felt anxious to maintain the new character with which they had been invested. But there still remains a great deal to be done throughout the vast tracts of country almost wholly inhabited by these people. Though not considered equal in intellectual development to the mountaineers of Europe, they share, with the highland freebooters of former days, the generosity and honour which seem common to the wildest tribes.

It often happens that regular campaigns are made against the Bheels, when they appear in force, threatening their more peaceable neighbours with an onslaught. Upon these occasions, if the young

officers who command the outposts are fond of the glorious sports of an Indian jungle, they do not scruple to throw themselves completely into the power of those against whom they have been sent in arms, and in no instance have they been known to suffer from their confidence. The Bheels are much delighted with skill in shooting ; they are also great admirers of English fire-arms, shewing all the wonder and surprise at double-barrels and percussion-locks, which such miraculous inventions are calculated to inspire amongst a rude people ; with them, the Freyschutz would be no fable, and they regard the possessors of such magical instruments with the highest degree of veneration. In the bosom of civilized society, the young European adventurers, who have joined the morning's sport and the evening bivouac with the Bheels, have recurred with the greatest delight to the period passed amongst a proscribed race, who seem to share the curse of the descendants of Ishmael, their hands being against every man, and every man's hand against them. Though the Bheels have been dispossessed of Mandoo, tigers are still there in great force, preferring the halls and chambers of palaces, to dens and caverns in the neighbouring woods. Parties, who come over from Mhow to visit the still splendid remains of the city, are in some danger of encountering tigers in the streets, they being the sole inhabitants, with the exception of the usual complement of *faqueers*, who supply a meal to their four-footed companions, when other game is scarce.

Notwithstanding the frightful neglect and desolation which have for so long a period characterized

Mandoo, a very large portion of its buildings are still in a tolerable state of preservation. It possesses some of the most beautiful specimens of Afghan architecture to be found in Hindostan, and is celebrated for its reservoirs of water, and the subaqueous apartments around them, the luxurious retreats, during the hot winds, of the princes and potentates of this once populous district. The ship, or water-palace, as it is indiscriminately called, is one of the most remarkable of the relics of Mandoo ; it is built upon a point of land between two large tanks, or rather lakes, and is as much admired for the beauty and picturesqueness of its architecture, as for the singularity of its situation. No one can look upon this delightful abode, without experiencing the most painful feeling of regret at the inevitable destruction to which it appears to be doomed. Not even in Gour, are the sensations produced by the total abandonment of a once splendid city by its human inhabitants, of so melancholy a nature as those which are excited by the awful stillness and utter solitude at Mandoo.

While in the occupation of Malwa, Sir John Malcolm took up his abode occasionally in this deserted city, and it sometimes attracts parties of visitors from the not very distant cantonments of Mhow ; but there seems to be very little hope of its ever again becoming a busy haunt of men. The greater number of the buildings at this place are constructed of a fine red-stone, a favourite material throughout the Upper Provinces of Hindostan ; but there is a beautiful mausoleum erected over the grave of Hussein Shah, entirely composed of white marble, brought all the

way from the banks of the Nerbudda. Mandoo has been described by old writers as a city of vast extent, twenty-two miles in circumference, and enough is still in existence to satisfy the visitor of the truth of this statement. It is only accessible from the plain below at one point, where there is a broad causeway, and a passage guarded by three gateways, still in good preservation, which leads through the rock to the summit of the mountain on which the city stands. The whole of this mountain is richly clothed with vegetation ; gigantic trees spring from the rifts, and the buildings above are embosomed in a mass of splendid foliage. The surrounding country is exceedingly fruitful, and the plains are covered with a peculiar kind of grass, very finely scented, which gives out its perfume to the wandering breeze, and when pressed, yields an oil which has obtained a very high degree of celebrity on account of its medicinal qualities. At Calcutta, where there is some difficulty in getting it genuine, it sells at a high price, but at the places in which it is made it may be procured very cheaply : it is used in all rheumatic complaints with success, and both natives and Europeans hold it in great estimation.

The geology of the neighbourhood of Mandoo is exceedingly interesting, and perhaps there are few places in India where naturalists would find their researches better rewarded. The whole of Malwa is remarkable for its botanical treasures, and the city of Mandoo is now one great menagerie, where the zoologist may study habits of beasts, birds, and reptiles, with great ease. To the antiquary, also,

there would be infinite gratification in the inspection of the Afghan remains, which are of a superior character to those scattered over the other scenes of their conquests. These people are now little known out of Afghanistan, except in the character of traders, in which capacity they travel through the greater part of India, frequently penetrating as far as Calcutta, where their huge forms and strange complexions, of that clear darkness which is so distinct from the copper, or rather bronze colour of the native Indians, contrast very strongly with the swarthy diminutive races of Bengal. The Afghans claim to be descendants of Saul, king of Israel, and if features be any proof of Jewish origin, they have truth upon their side. Bishop Heber was struck by their resemblance to the pictures of the old Masters, and none who have ever seen the rabbis delineated by the painters of the Italian and Flemish schools, can fail to acknowledge the great similarity between them and the persons who sometimes traverse vast distances in order to sell grapes, apples, dates, and pistachio-nuts in Hindostan.

MANDOO, notwithstanding its exceeding beauty, and the romantic interest which clings around its mouldering towers, is surpassed in both by that splendid city, which Sir John Mackintosh has practically styled, "The Palmyra of the Deccan." Were it not for the absence of marble, Bejapore might vie with Delhi and Agra, and perhaps neither of these places can boast of buildings equal in magnificence to the tomb of Mahmood Shah, or the durga of Ibrahim Padshah in the gardens of the Twelve Imaums. After

the partition of Aurungzebe's mighty empire, Bejapore, which, during the short period of two hundred years, existed as an independent Mahomedan kingdom, governed by the princes of the Adil Shah dynasty, fell into the hands of the Mahrattas, and it is only very lately that it has been accessible to European visitants.

Though not so totally abandoned as Mandoo, the city contains a very scanty population, composed chiefly of Mahomedan priests, and religious beggars, attached to the different mosques and durgas, the poorer classes of Mahrattas, and a few more orthodox Hindoos: the latter rejoice greatly in a small tank containing liquid of a milky hue, which they assert to be the true water of the Ganges, brought by a pious Brahmin to the city, and renewed in all its sanctity by some miraculous process. The city consists of two parts, both surrounded by a wall, that comprizing the citadel, being much more strongly fortified than the remaining portion. At a little distance, it does not betray the ruin and desolation which lurk within; cannon still bristle upon the bastions, and the immense assemblage of towers, domes, pinnacles, and spires, which shoot up into the sky, partially intermixed with tamarind and other trees, deceive the distant spectators, who cannot imagine that they are about to enter a vast wilderness, where the human habitations have crumbled into dust, leaving mosques and mausoleums to tell the tale of former glory. Though the palaces, which once graced Bejapore, could not have been inferior in splendour to any of the imperial residences still existing in India, they have suffered

to a far greater extent than the tombs and temples in their neighbourhood: many of the latter still being perfect, and promising to survive during many centuries.

Notices of Bejapore are scattered throughout many publications, but a regular history, or a continuation of that given by Ferishta, is still wanting, and it is scarcely possible to imagine any subject connected with Indian records which would be so interesting. After the first irruptions under Mahmood Ghizni, into India, the whole country offered a field for Mahomedan adventurers, who required little more than an enterprizing spirit and military skill, to establish their fortunes amid the troubles and distractions of the native powers. Yoosoof Adil Shah, the founder of Bejapore, is said to have been a son of the Turkish Emperor Bajazet, who, being saved in the general massacre of his brothers, by the substitution of a slave-boy, about his own age, was sent into a foreign country for safety, and when he attained to manhood, turning his steps to India, acquired some renown in the wars of the Deccan. Upon the death of his patron, the Patan empire falling into pieces, Yoosoof was encouraged to found a new kingdom, and to place himself at the head of it. He succeeded in his object, and notwithstanding the internal troubles and the foreign wars in which his successors were more or less engaged, during the whole period of their dynasty, they have left works behind them which would seem to require a protracted interval of the most profound peace. There is scarcely any city in India which boasts of public erections of so much splendour and

utility as Bejapore; the aqueducts, which are still in existence, are of the most extensive and superb description, and there are fountains, wells, tanks, and *bowlees*, all solidly constructed, either of stone, or finely tempered *chunam*, nearly innumerable.

The sovereigns of Bejapore maintained a good understanding with the Moghul emperors until the reign of Aurungzebe, who, almost without a pretext, put an end to a kingdom which he might have rendered tributary. It is said that his favourite daughter pointed out to him the probable effects of the narrow policy to which his selfish ambition would lead, but he paid no attention to her remonstrances, refusing to permit any monarch, even professing the same creed, to exist within the wide circle of his dominions. In weakening the Mahomedan power by the deposition of the sovereigns of the Deccan, Aurungzebe precipitated the fall of his successors, by giving advantages to the Mahrattas, who were beginning to shew manifestations of their rising greatness, which ought not to have passed unnoticed. Almost before Aurungzebe was cold in his grave, they possessed themselves of the kingdom which he had so unjustifiably wrested from its founders, and a very short period of time saw them masters of the territories which he had purchased at the expense of so many crimes. From the moment that Bejapore fell into the hands of the Mahrattas, its decay commenced; nothing ever flourished under the rule of a people equally destitute of public virtue, and of all relish for the refinements of civilized life. They plundered and massacred wherever they went, and grovelled in filth, in the mud huts

which they erected amid the smoking ruins of stately palaces.

When the British officers who served in the wars of Deccan beheld Bejapore, which until that period had been rarely visited by Europeans, they were astonished by the splendour which greeted their eyes upon every side. Major Moor, in one of his early works, writes thus: "We cannot but feel how inadequate we are to describe the meanest of a thousand buildings in this wonderful city, and would be very glad to see a pen better skilled in these matters so worthily employed. Ours was but a transient view, and for our own part, totally unused to such sights, we were so lost in admiration as scarcely to believe what we saw to be realities."

The walls of the citadel and the principal buildings of the city are of hewn stone, which is susceptible of a very high polish, some of the interiors shining with all the splendour of marble: the masonry also is well worthy of notice, many of the finest specimens of architecture being put together without the aid of cement. At the close of the campaigns under the Duke of Wellington, Bejapore was given up to the rajah of Satara, and since that period the progress of decay has been partially arrested. The revenues of some of the neighbouring villages have been set apart for the maintenance of the attendants at the tombs and mosques, and though neglect is but too visible, the visitors are not disgusted with the impurities which so speedily collect where bats and birds are permitted to dwell unmolested. There would be little difficulty in restoring the greater portion of the decaying splen-

dours of Bejapore, although some of its finest edifices are past recall.

The tomb of Mahmood Shah, from some defect in its construction, is reported to be in a very dangerous condition; the foundation has sunk, and the walls in more than one place are split from top to bottom. This gigantic, but somewhat heavy pile, may vie with the finest cathedrals in Europe, both in size and grandeur; the great dome, called by the natives the burra Gumbooz, is larger than the cupola of St. Paul's and only inferior in dimensions to that of St. Peter's at Rome. It is said that a silver shrine formerly covered the remains of Mahmood Shah, which are deposited in an immense hall beneath the dome; but this became the spoil of the Mahrattas, and the sarcophagi of the king and his family are now only remarkable for a very ugly, though highly-esteemed, coating of holy earth, brought from Mecca, mingled with sandalwood-dust, and formed into a coarse plaster.

The *durga* of Abou al Muzzuffer differs very widely in its style from that of Mahmood Shah, and though an immense pile, is distinguished for the lightness and elegance of its architecture. The interior is most exquisitely ornamented with enamelling of gold upon a blue and a black ground, the latter being polished so highly as to look like glass. It is said that the whole of the Koran is contained in the embellishments of this splendid edifice, emblazoned in large characters intermixed with arabesques tastefully sculptured in elegant combinations of fruit and flowers. Ibrahim Adil Shah, to whose memory this superb mausoleum

is dedicated, was one of the most popular of the sovereigns of Bejapore. He has left a name behind him equally revered both by Moslem and Hindoo, and his shrine is visited by the worshippers of Brihm, as well as the disciples of the prophet, each regarding him as a saint to whom their devotions may be paid with advantage to themselves. The corrupted state of Mahomedanism in India is strongly exhibited at Bejapore, where the true believers, now few and of no weight in the community, are little better than idolators.

There is a large piece of brass ordnance at Bejapore, which is an object of veneration amongst all castes and sects, who pay to the unseen power lodged in this engine of destruction, homage almost amounting to divine honours. Many fabulous legends are told by the natives about this gun, which is named *Mulki-i-Meidan*, 'sovereign of the plain,' and which became the spoil of Ali Adil Shah, who took it in battle against the king of Ahmednuggur. The weight of the Monarch of the Plain is forty tons, and it is of correspondent dimensions, so large in fact, that it has never yet been charged with the quantity of powder which its chamber would contain. The metal of which it is composed is said to have a considerable portion of silver, and a smaller quantity of gold, mixed with the tin and copper forming its chief materials. When struck, it emits a clear, but somewhat awful sound, similar to that of an enormous bell, which is endurable only at a considerable distance. The mighty voice given forth by a touch, added to the terrible idea of havoc conveyed by this formidable piece of artillery,

doubtless has assisted in impressing the natives with a feeling of reverence towards a prodigy of strength and power, which they cannot imagine to have been wholly the work of man. They burn incense before it, smear it over with cinnabar and oil, wreath it with flowery garlands, and never approach it without joined hands and countenances expressive of the highest degree of reverence and devotion.

There is a tradition current at Bejapore, respecting a sister of the *Mulk-i-Meidan*, named *Kurk o-Burdglee*, 'thunder and lightning;' but no authentic account has been preserved of it, and its existence has been doubted. Yet, as the natives of India seem always to have been ambitious of possessing themselves of pieces of ordnance beyond the ordinary size,—the great gun at Agra being one of the best known specimens,—we must not too hastily reject the tales told about the *Kurk-o-Budglee*, which is said to have been carried to Poonah. The *Mulk-i-Meidam* is sometimes fired, but upon very rare occasions. The rajah of Satara did Sir John Malcolm the honour of saluting him with the discharge of this celebrated gun, and the accounts of the effects it produced will probably prevent it from being again the cause of similar catastrophes: some of the old buildings came down; others shook to their foundations, and several women were frightened to death by the horrors of the concussion.

During the brief period of the Adil Shah dynasty, the Portuguese obtained a settlement at Goa. Unfortunately, their chronicles are of a very confused description, and afford little information respecting the events which were passing around them. We learn

nothing from their accounts of the beauty and magnitude of a city, which must, from its very commencement, have been one of the most remarkable places in India. Tavernier, who was the earliest European traveller in the Deccan, either could not have seen it, or must have wilfully misrepresented a place, which he describes as having nothing worthy of note, excepting the crocodiles inhabiting the surrounding ditch. Bejapore is not now famous for its alligators ; their existence in the moat has been denied, and this extraordinary city is still without an historian, there being scarcely even the most brief catalogue extant of the various objects calculated to attract the attention of the curious.

The Turkish descent of Yoosif Adil Shah, his Persian connexions, and the foreigners from other countries whom he invited to his court, and who were entertained by him and his successors with truly regal magnificence, occasioned the introduction of a greater variety in the styles of the different buildings of Bejapore, than is to be found in any other city in India. A few pencils have been employed in delineating some of the most splendid ; but volumes would be required to give an adequate idea of the architectural beauties of this unaccountably neglected place. During the long period in which the continent was closed to adventurous footsteps, it seems wonderful that India should not have been more attractive to persons of truant disposition. The works of Daniell and of Salt were, or ought to have been, sufficient to shew that the plains of Hindostan possessed objects meriting attention ; but they were suffered to pass unheeded,

and few seemed to think India worthy of a thought, until the publication of the journal of the late Bishop Heber afforded newer and juster ideas of a country replete with interest.

Bejapore is celebrated for its tamarind-trees ; the groves which have arisen amidst the once populous streets and thoroughfares of this extensive capital, have not, as at Gour and Mandoo, completely usurped the soil, or become the agent of desolation ; the growth of vegetation is slower in the arid plains of the Decan ; and the green canopy of the trees, and the cool shades beneath them, are particularly agreeable amidst the immense masses of buildings. The inhabited part of Bejapore bears a very small proportion to the space which is almost wholly deserted ; large tracts occur entirely covered with ruins, the remnants of dwelling-houses long laid prostrate on the earth. Emerging from these dreary-looking fragments, we come to some splendid building still entire, and while passing through immense quadrangles, watered by fountains and adorned with flowers, we can scarcely believe they are situated amid a wide waste of ruins. The fort is garrisoned by a few Mahratta soldiers, who keep the guns in tolerable order ; and every season increases the number of visitants, attracted by the report of the architectural wonders of the place.

There are several fine tanks and reservoirs of water kept in good preservation ; one of these which bears the name of the *Taj Bowlee*, is a splendid piece of workmanship, surrounded by a *serai*, for the accommodation of travellers, and approached through a noble gateway. Very little of the ground which is

unoccupied by buildings has been brought under cultivation, and the whole of the country around the city exhibits marks of neglect. The inhabitants, who are not numerous, are perhaps too poor to repair the ravages of war, or they have not yet acquired confidence in the security of property. The noble ambition which would lead to the restoration of fading splendour, does not appear to belong to the native character. Though displaying a passion for the pomp of architecture, they have no pleasure in preserving the works of others from decay. Comparatively slight exertions would suffice to avert the fate which seems impending over Bejapore ; but, if left to the public spirit of the ruling powers, we fear that there is little chance of its ever regaining any of the advantages it has lost, and it is impossible not to regret that this beautiful city belonged to the ceded portion of the district.

Religious mendicants abound in Bejapore ; these are chiefly of the Mahomedan persuasion ; although, besides the small pond, supposed to contain the holy water of the Ganges, there is a Hindoo temple, of such great antiquity, as to be said to be the work of the Pandoos, the architects to whom the cathedral-like excavations of Ellora are attributed. This temple is extremely low, the roof resting upon clusters of pillars formed of single stones, and apparently belonging to an age earlier, or at least ruder, than that which produced the magnificent designs and rich sculptures of the cave-temples.

Many of the *faqueers* before-mentioned subsist entirely upon casual charity, having nothing from the religious edifices which they have made their abode, except-

ing the shelter of a roof; others receive a regular stipend from the Government, and it is to their zeal that the tombs and mosques are indebted for the cleanliness which a true believer is always desirous to maintain in every shrine. It is the custom in many Mahomedan temples in India, to make offerings of cloths for canopies and other things, which are either divided amongst the *moollahs* in attendance, or sold for their benefit; but Bejapore, though boasting many saints, attracts few pilgrims; while other *durgas*, greatly inferior in splendour, and not more celebrated for the ashes they contain, are bountifully endowed by the contributions of the pious. The few rupees which Christians disburse amongst the persons in care of the numerous places of worship, form nearly the sole source of emolument of the priesthood at Bejapore, independent of the scanty sum already mentioned as being devoted to their maintenance. From these men very little information which can be depended upon is gained; they launch out into wild and improbable tales, entertaining enough in themselves, but disappointing to persons really desirous to become acquainted with facts relating to some of the nameless tombs and temples prodigally scattered in every quarter of the city.

The notion that vast treasures are concealed amidst the ruins, is very prevalent, and would be the making of the fortune of an adept of the Dousterswivel genus. Many persons have been known to speculate in the purchase of an old wall; but as yet the success of these experiments has not been made public. Even Runjeet Sing and the Begum Sumroo do not appear, clever and well-informed as they both undoubtedly

are, to be aware of the superior security of a foreign bank to any subterranean place of deposit for their surplus wealth ; and as they are said to bury money every year, there can be little doubt that this favourite expedient was resorted to in former times all over India.

Bejapore, in all probability, possesses concealed mines of gold and gems ; but, without the aid of the divining-rod, it would be very difficult to discover them. One small mausoleum, called the *Mootee gil*, is said to derive its name from an interior coating of *chunam*, formed of pounded pearls. A nobleman, who possessed a vast quantity of these valuable gems, excited the envy of the reigning prince, and was in danger of being arrested upon a charge of treason, the only pretext which could be devised to deprive him of the coveted treasures. Obtaining timely notice of the plot, he explained the predicament in which he stood to the ladies of the *zenana*, who, determining to defeat the object which the tyrant had in view, destroyed all the value of the prize, by reducing the pearls to powder. It was no longer considered worth while to pursue the owner of a heap of useless dust, and the monarch spared himself a crime by which there was nothing to be gained ; the pounded gems were, it is said, afterwards given to a religious person, who converted them into *chunam*, and made it the decoration of a tomb, which assuredly appears to be stuccoed with some very precious material.

Weeks, nay even months, might be spent in the examination of all the curious objects which Bejapore affords, and there could scarcely be a more interesting

task than that of filling up the meagre details with which alone we have hitherto been furnished, concerning a city which has been so unaccountably cheated of its well-merited renown.

CHAPTER XIII.

ENVIRONS OF CALCUTTA.

BARRACKPORE, SERAMPORE, AND DUM DUM.

It has been the policy of the Indian Government to separate soldiers and citizens from each other; the forces, therefore, which are considered necessary for the defence of Calcutta, are stationed, the infantry at the distance of sixteen miles, and the artillery at eight, from the seat of Government. Fort William (a stronghold to which the Governor-general may retire in case of invasion from abroad or rebellion at home, and considered by experienced engineers to be impregnable, which will contain provisions and stores to withstand a siege as long as that of Troy), in times of security, is garrisoned by a single King's regiment, or a part of two at the most, the sepoy duties being performed by a detachment from Barrackpore, relieved at stated periods, while the guard employed in Calcutta is composed of the city militia.

BARRACKPORE is an irregularly-built station, situated on the left bank of the Hooghly. Many of the houses

are as splendid as the mansions of the neighbouring city ; but the larger portion consist of bungalows considerably smaller than those of the Upper Provinces, but, generally speaking, more carefully finished, and built and fitted up in a superior style. A few look upon the river, but there is no broad esplanade, as upon the opposite bank, where Serampore's proud palaces are mirrored on the glassy surface of the stream. Those mansions, however, which do command the fresh breezes from the water, are delightfully cool, and the views from the balconies are superb ; for it is scarcely possible to imagine any thing more grand and imposing, in an architectural display, than the splendid settlement of the Danes upon the Hooghly. The beauties of Barrackpore are of a different kind ; its buildings are embosomed in trees, and with the exception of the palace of the Governor-general, which is raised in a commanding situation, only peep out between the branches of luxuriant groves. The country all round is wooded to excess, affording a most agreeable shade, and offering specimens of floral magnificence not to be surpassed in any part of the world. The magnolia attains to a gigantic size, and fills the air with perfume from its silvery vases ; other forest-trees bear blossoms of equal beauty ; the richly-wreathed pink acacia, and numerous tribes, adorned with garlands of deep crimson and bright yellow, abound ; and although, with the exception of the park, which has been raised into sweeping undulations by artificial means, the cantonments and their vicinity present a flat surface, the combinations of wood, water, and green sward, in numberless vistas, nooks, and

small open spaces, yield scenes of tranquil beauty, which eyes, however cold, can scarcely contemplate unmoved.

Though an authoritative mandate from the Court of Directors, dictated by unaffected alarm, put an effective stop to the completion of one of the Marquess of Wellesley's most splendid projects, Barrackpore is still indebted to him for a park, which is justly considered one of the finest specimens of dressed and ornamented nature which taste has ever produced. Enough has been done to the mansion to render it a very elegant and commodious residence, and the gardens attached to it are unrivalled both in beauty and stateliness, combining the grandeur of Asiatic proportions with the picturesqueness of European design. The gravelled avenues are wide enough to allow wheel-carriages to pass, and these ample paths wind through broad parterres, and shrubberies of the most brilliant flowers, sometimes skirting along high walls of creeping plants trained against lofty trees, at others overlooking large tanks so completely covered with the pink blossoms of the lotus, as to conceal the element in which this splendid aquatic plant delights. A large stud of elephants is kept at Barrackpore, and these noble animals, decorated with flowing *jhoods* of scarlet cloth, edged with gold, and bearing fair freights of ladies belonging to the vice-regal court, may be seen pacing along the flowery labyrinths, to European eyes strange guests in a private garden. These blooming plantations afford excellent parrot-shooting, a sport to which some of the great men of the presidency are said to be much addicted, but which it grieves persons possessed of the

slightest degree of sentiment to see carried on in the secluded haunts of a pleasure-ground, and against those bright-winged visitants, whose gem-like plumage adds so much of ornament to the scene.*

The park has been laid out and planted with great care and taste; it affords specimens of trees which are not to be found congregated together in any other part of India: some of these exotics are particularly distinguished for their size and beauty, and are objects of great interest to all the visitors. The elevated portions of Barrackpore Park command extensive views of the superb sweeps of the river, with their enchanting varieties of scenery, their rich woods and noble residences, the broad ghaut intervening, and occasionally a tower-encircled dome or light minar, rising from the umbrageous groves.

Barrackpore, as it may be easily imagined, is a great resort for all classes of persons from Calcutta; it is not yet furnished with an hotel or a boarding-house of any kind for the reception of strangers, who must be billeted by letters of introduction upon private families. Doubtless, this desideratum, if it be one, will be soon supplied, as in the influx of Europeans which the new order of things will bring to India, private hospitality must be speedily worn out. The distance from Calcutta is sixteen miles, and it is approached on the land side by one of the finest roads in the world,

* There are several varieties of the paroquet tribe in Bengal, some of them the loveliest little creatures imaginable, with purple heads covered with bloom like a freshly-ripened plum; others ring-necked, with slender elegant bodies, and exceedingly long tails.

very broad, kept in excellent repair, and shaded, to the great delight and comfort of the various traversers, by an avenue of trees. The traffic is of course very considerable, the tide interfering with the water-carriage; *coolies* and *hurkaras* of every description are journeying to and fro at all hours of the day.

Notwithstanding the shelter afforded by the leafy canopy above, Europeans do not often venture to brave the noon-tide heat, except in the mildest season of the year, their progress being chiefly performed in the morning or evening. Half-way, at a place which bears the name of Cox's Bungalow, relays of horses, for those who travel in wheel-carriages, are stationed; the customary number of bearers will, however, convey a palanquin the whole distance; and in the days of velocipedes, young men, easily incited to deeds of enterprise, have been known to go up in the morning and return at night, with no assistance save that afforded by their wooden chargers: a feat which the climate of Bengal renders worthy of record, for even in the cold weather violent exercise of any kind is attended with some danger. The journey to Barrackpore must be enchanting to those who delight in forest-scenery; the hand of man is apparent in the smooth, finely-levelled road, which offers itself to the traveller: but a dense jungle appears to close it in on either side. Native huts, of the wildest and simplest construction, meet the eye in the most picturesque situations, many with scarcely any roof excepting that afforded by the overhanging branches of trees, which never lose their leafy mantles, yet not destitute of an air of comfort; the floors, of coarse but well-tempered *chunam*, being

scrupulously clean, and the jars and other domestic utensils neatly arranged and kept in order. Monkeys may be detected, disporting amidst blossoming boughs ; the jackal glides through the covert, and the woods echo with the sullen notes of lonely birds. The denseness of the population, and the vast numbers of natives, who go on their way rejoicing in the shade, which tends so much to lighten their toils, prevent all idea of solitude, though the prospects are so truly and exclusively sylvan, that it is not until the suburbs of Calcutta are approached, that the traveller can imagine himself in the close vicinity of the capital of Bengal. Beyond these suburbs, there is nothing of the stir and tumult usually to be seen in the outskirts of a large city ; few private conveyances of any kind, and no public Anglo-Indian vehicle : an omnibus was attempted, but did not succeed. At the time of its starting, there were too many prejudices to contend against ; few would condescend to enter it except by way of frolic, and it was soon laid up in ordinary in the builder's yard. The time is perhaps not far distant when the echoes of the Barrackpore woods may be startled by the thumping of a steam-engine, and the passengers learn to encounter the heat of a furnace added to that which they now find so difficult to endure.

This fine road is preferred, by the visitors to Serampore, to the less direct communication on the other side of the river, though it involves the necessity of crossing the Hooghly in a boat. The beauty of the latter-named place, its delightful situation, the easy distance from Calcutta, and the comparative cheapness

of its bazaars, would render it a very desirable retreat for the families of many persons engaged in mercantile business at the presidency, were it not for the circumstance of its being a sanctuary against the merciless hostilities of Calcutta creditors. Under the control of a Danish governor, and protected by its own peculiar laws, it offers an asylum for persecuted debtors, and is, in fact, a sort of *Alsatia*, where those who dread the horrors of a writ betake themselves until they can arrange their affairs. A residence at Serampore, therefore, is productive of a very unpleasant imputation, and few voluntarily encounter the stigma attached to it. This small and beautiful settlement forms also the Gretna Green of Bengal, at which parties may not only contract a clandestine marriage, but, when tired of the connexion, divorce each other with very little trouble and expense. Privileges so tempting, to the credit of the neighbouring community, are not often taken advantage of, and the place is happily more celebrated for its missionary college and press than for the labours of those who supply the places of proctors and other functionaries connected with ecclesiastical courts.

SERAMPORE is, without exception, the best-built and best-kept European settlement in India. In addition to its superb esplanade, which stretches along the river's bank, it is composed of several regular streets, presenting a succession of handsome houses, inclosed in spacious gardens and interspersed with fine trees; the whole is kept scrupulously clean by the daily task-work of the convicts, who carefully weed the roads,

and remove every unsightly object. The society at Serampore is very limited; the appointments of the Governor are by no means splendid; he lives in a style of great simplicity, without affecting any state, appearing in public in a handsome but plain equipage, generally a palanquin, attended by a few *chobdars*, who brandish their silver maces and make as much noise as they can to arouse the world with the intelligence that the *burra sahib* is passing by: a mode of procedure which the natives think necessary to establish their own importance as well as that of their master. Besides the Governor, there are not many official situations of consequence; a small number of merchants, and the families of gentlemen attached to the missionary college, comprise the principal residents; the rest are made up of people of very dubious rank, and strangers, whose claims to respectability are, from the occasion of their sojourn, of course rather doubtful. The religious creed of many of the settled inhabitants indispose them to gaiety of any kind, and the Danish residents seem to cultivate retired and domestic habits; there is consequently less visiting, party-giving, or festivities of any description, going on at Serampore than in any other place in India under European sway.

Notwithstanding these circumstances, Serampore must certainly be styled a cheerful town, and it is in many respects preferable to its military neighbour. The esplanade, after sunset, usually exhibits a very gay scene; it is the only place in Bengal in which custom sanctions a promenade: the whole of the European population is poured forth, some in carriages, but the majority on foot, to enjoy the refreshing gales

from the water, and the beauties of the surrounding prospect. These frequently attract large parties from the opposite cantonments; groups of well-dressed ladies, many without bonnets, which are not deemed necessary appendages in the hot seasons, are seen surrounding the *ton-jaun* which conveys some less robust friend. Gentlemen are, of course, in full attendance; and cadets especially, rejoice in their freedom from military restraint, and in the indulgence of pedestrian exercise, which is deemed *infra dig* at the presidency. The tide also brings numerous visitors from Calcutta, particularly the officers of trading vessels, anxious to penetrate into the interior, and to travel, as they term it, up the country.

There would be some difficulty in imagining a more beautiful scene than that which evening presents at Serampore. The breadth of the river, its superb sweeps, the woody promontories which jut into it, diversified by picturesque buildings; the varied richness of the foliage; the myriads of fire-flies, and the silvery brightness of the waters retaining the last crimson flush of sun-set, until night comes to pave the shining surface with stars, form altogether so enchanting a combination, that fancy delights to recal the landscape in all its original splendour.

Barrackpore, as a military station, is in bad odour with the officers of the Bengal army; very few appear to appreciate the advantages of being so near to the festal scenes of Calcutta; the climate of the Upper Provinces is esteemed of superior salubrity, and the very name of *half-batta* is sufficient to render it hateful. Exclusive of the temptations to expense which a large

society must always hold forth, the actual rate of living at Barrackpore, even with the diminution of the batta, cannot possibly be higher than that of more remote stations, where European commodities are double and sometimes treble in price. The conveniences of life are infinitely more abundant, and its pleasures incalculably greater ; nevertheless, it has an ill repute, and, by a happy adaptation of taste to the scenes selected for the most permanent abode of the Company's military servants, the Mofussil is generally preferred to the neighbourhood of the metropolis.

The society of Barrackpore is too large to admit of that close and constant intercourse, which is carried on at less populous stations, where the domestication of persons must be pleasant or the reverse, according as their tastes and habits are suited to those of each other ; but it offers the great advantage of a choice of acquaintance ; news, fashions, and the latest publications from England, France, and America, are easily attainable ; the balls and parties of Calcutta are within reach ; and all the enjoyments derivable from the beauties of cultivated nature are afforded in the lovely landscapes which appear on every side.

The garrison at Barrackpore consists of several regiments of sepoy, under the command of a major-general ; the staff is exceedingly numerous, embracing appointments peculiar to the station. There are besides a considerable number of private residents, the families of retired officers, and widows who, possessing large connexions in India, prefer it as a residence to the parent state ; many of these persons enjoy considerable wealth, and live in a style of appropriate

splendour. Nevertheless, the society is subjected to great vicissitudes, and its gaiety cannot be depended upon for more than the passing season. The caprice of some, the unsocial disposition of others, or the stoppage of a house of agency, will put an end for a time to all festivities; and the extreme of dulness prevails until a change in the regiments, or some other equally favourable circumstances, occur to give a fresh impetus to the flagging spirits of the community. The presence of the Governor-general is not always productive of the gaiety which is generally expected to be the accompaniment of a vice-regal court.

Barrackpore is frequently resorted to by the chief person in the state, as a retreat from the toils of business, and the scarcely less fatiguing duties entailed upon him at public entertainments. Few balls or fêtes of any kind are given at the Park, possibly to avoid the offence which the exclusion of visitors from Calcutta might give, and the great inconvenience resulting from their attendance. The last affair of the kind proved a complete failure, in consequence of an unexpected gale from the south-west; a contingency from which Bengal only for the short period of the cold season is altogether free. A very large proportion of the guests determined to go up by water, anticipating a delightful excursion by star-light; but the horrors of the storm burst upon them ere they could reach their destination; the Hooghly ran mountains high, washing over the decks of the frail little summer-vessels, and driving many on shore, to the consternation of the passengers and the utter ruin of their ball-dresses. The travellers by land were not better

off; the horses took fright at the lightning; the road was rendered impassable by trees torn up by the roots; ladies, terrified out of their senses, made an attempt to walk, and the party, when collected at last, presented a most lugubrious spectacle, a concourse of wet, weary, miserable guests, eagerly impatient to return to their homes, yet compelled to await more favourable weather.

The society at Barrackpore is sufficiently extensive not only to admit of selection, but also to allow its leaders the indulgence of the exclusiveness so much the fashion at home. Persons who consider themselves eligible are sometimes left out of the invitations to the station-balls, and parties more strictly private are scrupulously composed of families of a certain rank, a distinction unknown in the Mofussil, and which is very grievous to bear: at least, such are the complaints alleged against Barrackpore by discontented individuals; but these statements must be taken with some grains of allowance, the extent of the evil depending entirely upon the temper of those persons who hold the highest offices, and who remain too short a time stationary to give a permanent tone to society.

Cadets, formerly, on their arrival at Calcutta, were permitted to travel alone, or in company with one or two other lads, as raw and as ignorant as themselves, to the places of their destination; but this is no longer the case. Inexperienced boys, ripe and ready for all sorts of mischief, were found to be woeful mismanagers of their own concerns, and to be too ready to trespass on the rights and privileges of the natives; they rarely penetrated far into the interior without getting into

some scrape, the least of their exploits being the squandering of all their money at the first halt upon the road, with the consequence of depending upon their skill in foraging for the remainder of the journey. Cheated by dishonest natives, they were apt to take revenge upon those who were so unfortunate as to fall into their clutches ; and considering all the surrounding temptations, it is only wonderful that so few outrages were committed by the wild youth let loose in a foreign country, and inflated with the idea of their own importance. Many amusing narratives may be gathered from the sober lips of veterans, pleased to recal the sports and frolics of their boyish days ; but tragic incidents sometimes occurred, and it was at length found expedient to appoint cadets, posted to regiments stationed at distant places, to do duty at Barrackpore until they could be sent up the river in a fleet under the care of an experienced officer. Here they are taught their first military lessons, and as the duties are performed under the eye of a major-general, they are usually glad to escape to some station where they hope to enjoy a greater degree of liberty, since, however exciting the perils and fatigues encountered in a hot campaign, there is apparently nothing more irksome to a soldier, nothing that is found to be so fertile a subject of complaint, as the necessity of attending drill, of appearing on parade, of mounting guard, and of dressing according to regulation. This last appears to be the greatest grievance of all. A soldier, even in uniform, seems to take a pleasure in making himself look as unmilitary as possible, and his chief care appears to be to evade or defy the orders issued

respecting the precise quantity of accoutrements to be worn, and the manner of wearing them. Droll exhibitions are sometimes made by the cadets of Barrackpore, who, ere the first gloss has faded from the uniforms which were the objects of their school-day ambition, ape the toil-worn soldier, and grumble over the annoyance of "being in harness."

The regulations in force respecting the Indian army are framed, however, with the greatest attention to the comfort of both privates and officers. During the hot weather, the uniform is composed of white calico decorated with the regimental button, and officers upon duty are only required to wear a jacket, which is termed a *raggee*, and which may be made of the thinnest scarlet or blue cashmere, China crape, or China silk ; frock coats are often manufactured of the latter material, and worn in undress, while young civilians, who, though under no such restrictions, are not fond of exhibiting themselves in the guise of a barber or a cook, appear in swallow-tailed coats of China crape, which, when well-made, are often mistaken for cloth. At set dinners, where to arrive in dishabille might be considered as an affront, the male guests, if not provided with silk attire, usually direct their bearers (*Anglicè*, valets) to take a white jacket to the entertainer's house, in the hope that they may be invited to substitute it for a more cumbersome garment ; and at Calcutta and Barrackpore, where strangers may not be aware that this option will be given them, the master of the mansion usually issues out a number of jackets from his own wardrobe, which he offers to the new arrivals, and the ante-

chambers are straightway converted into dressing-rooms. It is only at grand parties, and under the surveillance of general officers, that the military guests are compelled to endure the horrors of warm clothing ; but there are some commandants who are themselves such dried-up and withered anatomies, that they have no compassion for the more corpulent portion of their species, and compel those who have the misfortune to be placed under their control, to submit to a process to which the sufferings of a Newmarket jockey in training are nothing. The exceeding ugliness of the dress adopted by the most refined nations of Europe is in no place more apparent than in India, where it is contrasted with the flowing garments of the natives, and where absolute necessity obliges the wearers to have it fabricated from the same materials which compose the wide trowsers and graceful vests of their attendants. The round sailor's jacket and tight trowsers, brought by the early factors from their ships, have obtained to this day in India, and while less elegant native customs have found universal favour in European eyes, the greatest possible distinction in dress has been thought necessary. Without pretending to discuss the wisdom of this policy, it may be said that the effect is absolutely shocking to persons of any taste. At Calcutta and Barrackpore, the barbarisms in dress are the most striking, for custom renders them familiar, and by the time that the travellers have reached the Upper Provinces, they have become habituated, if not reconciled, to the sight of gentlemen clothed from head to foot in ill-shaped garments of white cotton, in which the greatest dandy

can only distinguish himself by the quantity of the starch.

The cemetery at Barrackpore is better kept than most places of a similar kind in India. It stands in a cheerful situation, not far from the park, and quite close to a handsome residence belonging to an officer on the staff, whose lovely and healthy family, while the writer partook of the ready hospitalities of his mansion, afforded a pleasing contradiction to the tale told by the too numerous graves and monuments. But the climate of Barrackpore must not be estimated by the number of deaths which take place in it, since persons in ill-health, from the Upper Provinces, frequently breathe their last at this place, upon the eve of their embarkation for Europe, and new arrivals from colder countries fall victims to imprudences, which cannot be committed with impunity in any part of India.

DUM DUM, the cantonment selected for the headquarters of the Bengal artillery, does not owe so much to nature as its neighbouring military station. The lines occupy an extensive plain, unmarked by any feature worthy of peculiar notice, the little beauty it possesses being entirely the work of art. Handsome houses are scattered irregularly about, with pleasure-grounds around them, which are generally planted with care and taste. The mess-room and its accompaniments form a very superb building, affording suites of apartments upon a far more magnificent scale than those belonging to any European barrack. The splendour of Woolwich fades before the grandeur of Dum Dum ; but the balls, which are given in the latter

place every month, are not kept up with the same degree of spirit which characterises the parties at Woolwich, and, even when the dulness which frequently pervades Calcutta might be supposed to render them of great importance, are very ill-attended by visitors from the presidency. Thirty or forty ladies, occupying the top of an immense apartment, surrounded by all the beaux who have any hope of being noticed by them, afford a tantalising spectacle to crowds of young men, taking up their modest stations at a distance, and looking at the dance without daring to indulge the slightest expectation of having an opportunity of joining in it. The ladies, not suffered to repose during a single quadrille, may well envy the most forlorn coteries of neglected damsels in England, condemned to patience and a bench without a chance of being invited to quit their seats, for the duties imposed upon them are of a very arduous nature, and to refuse to dance at all, according to the custom of male exquisites at home, too much in request, would give such deep offence, that few parents or guardians allow their fair charges to incur the odium.

The society at Dum Dum has not yet recovered from the paralyzing effect produced by the diminution of the *batta*. In the first alarm and terror, lest pay and allowances of every kind should sustain similar clipping and curtailings, many amusements and indulgences were relinquished; and now that the panic has subsided, some from motives of economy, and others from the apprehension that too great a display of superfluous cash so near the seat of Government,

might sanction a farther reduction, have wholly withdrawn their support from the theatre and other public amusements of the place. In former times, the dramatic performances at Dum Dum almost rivalled those of Chowringee. It was not unusual to find an actor of considerable merit, and one who had become thoroughly acquainted with stage-business on the boards of a minor theatre in London, amongst the recruits enlisted for the artillery ; such experience is frequently more valuable than talent in the raw material, for amateurs require a good deal of drilling before they can be brought to attend to the minutiae, of such great importance to the effect of a play. Dum Dum, in its best days, has boasted performers sufficiently attractive to bring an audience from Calcutta ; but it has shared in the general depression of theatrical property ; few stars illumine its declining glories, and the once-crowded parterre exhibits a beggarly account of empty benches. Occasionally an attempt is made to revive the good old times ; but they have all failed, and were it not for the persevering efforts of a few stage-struck heroes, who are content to perform to thin houses, rather than not at all, lamps would no longer twinkle on the degenerate boards of the Dum Dum theatre. Its external appearance is not very prepossessing ; but in that respect it is not much worse than its proud neighbour in Chowringee, which boasts little outward architectural display, though the interior is both handsome and commodious.

While upon the subject of theatricals, in and near the Presidency, an exhibition more strange than amus-

ing should not pass unnoticed; the performance, or rather the attempted performance, of English plays by Hindoo youths; an undertaking which, as it may readily be supposed, was not crowned with much success. This inauspicious beginning, however, may lead to better things; native aspirants for the honours of the sock and buskin, may perceive the propriety of confining themselves to the representation of dramas to which their complexion would be appropriate; and when the catalogue of European plays is exhausted, and the Aurungzebes and Tamerlanes have run themselves out of favour, authors may start up amidst the corps, and employ their pens in illustrating the public and domestic occurrences of their country, in tragedy, comedy, opera, and farce. Though the execution might not be first-rate, such productions could not fail to be extremely curious and interesting; they would lead to a better acquaintance with the manners and customs of the people of Hindostan, and prevent such monstrous exhibitions as are presented to this enlightened age, in dramas resembling those styled "*The Cataracts of the Ganges*," "*The Lions of Mysore*," &c.

A fair proportion of the beauty and fashion of Calcutta is sometimes to be seen at the grand reviews and field-days of the artillery at Dum Dum; but these splendid military spectacles do not attract so large a concourse of gazers as might be expected. Anglo-Indians are not to be stimulated to exertion by any ordinary degree of excitement; they speedily lose that passion for sight-seeing, which at home induces crowds of people to brave dust, fatigue, hunger, and

lowering clouds; they will not put themselves out of their way except upon very great occasions, and never voluntarily encounter a tenth part of the risk dared by the fashionable world in England at archery-meetings, horticultural-breakfasts, races, and reviews, where perils by land or by water, upsets in crowded roads, deluges in open carriages, with the impossibility of getting anything to eat at inns full to suffocation, present a catalogue of evils sufficient to detain every person possessed of common prudence at home. The settled state of the weather, in the cold season in India, must remove all apprehensions from those skyey influences, which have such a fatal effect upon out-of-door amusements in England; but ships are launched, and military manœuvres practised, without attracting many spectators.

Dum Dum possesses a good station-library, which is amply furnished with new publications as they come out from England. There are few places in India where young officers have the advantage of so many opportunities of improving their minds, and of fitting themselves for their profession; its vicinity to Calcutta enables them to procure books and instruction upon scientific subjects difficult of attainment in more remote cantonments; enough of mental relaxation may be found in the society, which is large and cheerful, without being dissipated; and temptations to idleness are not so great as at Barrackpore, the grand thoroughfare to the Upper Provinces, and a place which no stranger landing at Calcutta omits to visit.

Dum Dum is much less frequented, the scenery

possessing little attraction ; there are, however, some mansions in the neighbourhood, belonging to rich natives, which are objects of great interest and curiosity to Europeans. One of these inhabited by a rajah, is distinguished for its menagerie, the only one of the kind now existing in Bengal, that at Barackpore Park being dismantled. The collection has been greatly enriched by the donations of the present Governor-general, who presented the animals, which formerly inhabited the cages in the Park, to a gentleman less alarmed by the expense of their maintenance. The specimens of the wild tribes of Bengal exhibited in this zoological garden are superb ; but the collection is, of course, deficient in the less known natives of the upper and hilly districts of India, the forest denizens of Nipal, which will not live in the hot season in the plains, and for which it would be so desirable to have a depôt near the coast, whence they might be shipped at the end of the cold weather for England. Doubtless some arrangement of this nature will take place in the course of a few years, and the visitors of European menageries will be delighted with the sight of animals which they have hitherto only known from the descriptions of travellers.

A garden-house, about four miles from Dum Dum, on the road to Calcutta, the occasional residence of Dwarknauth Tagore, a rich and highly intelligent native gentleman, possesses many attractions to Europeans, who gladly avail themselves of the hospitalities of the courteous owner. Dwarknauth Tagore converses fluently in English with his guests, whom he receives entirely after the European fashion, permitting (al-

though a Hindoo) fowls and butcher's meat, with the exception of beef, to appear at his well-covered table, at which he occupies a seat, challenging the company, the ladies especially, to take wine, but refraining from the more solid food which is placed before him. The house is a beautiful and commodious structure, furnished in the best taste, and strictly in accordance with our ideas of Asiatic luxury, though differing widely from the real state of things in native houses; sofas, stools, and ottomans abound; some of the rooms are hung with fine engravings, and others are decorated with the best specimens of original paintings which Calcutta can afford; several excellent portraits, from the pencil of Mr. George Beechey, and some clever productions from other European artists who have bent their steps to India. The tables are covered with books of prints, and portfolios of the most splendid description; in short, it is a most delightful retreat, the gardens and pleasure-grounds being laid out in a style correspondent with the interior. The entertainments given by Dwarknauth Tagore, at this charming mansion are very frequent, and he delights in obliging his friends by lending it for the wedding abode of brides and bridegrooms, who, in India, are rarely so fortunate as to be enabled to follow the English fashion of making an excursion during the honey-moon, on account of the scarcity of hotels and country-houses at their disposal. Ishara, Barrackpore, Dum Dum, and Garden Reach, afford asylums for newly-married couples who are blessed with accommodating friends ready to vacate and lend their houses for the occasion; but these lucky individuals bear no proportion to the

numbers who, after the celebration of their nuptials in the cathedral, are compelled to retire quietly, and without the slightest *éclât*, to their own homes, and to fall in at once to the domestic routine, for which it is considered more advisable to have some preparation. No place in the neighbourhood of Calcutta can be better suited for the scene of bridal happiness than the delightful country mansion of Dwarknauth Tagore. Here are charming gardens to walk in, secluded rides and drives for evening exercise, and books and pictures to supply subjects for conversation, when those sweet topics are exhausted which, only in the days of courtship, are believed to afford never-ending resources.

CHAPTER XIV.

MADRAS, SERINGAPATAM, AND BANGALORE.

THAT the native armies of Madras and Bombay are equal in the field, in strength, vigour, and good conduct, to that of Bengal, there is no doubt ; officers of the King's service, who, at different periods, have commanded in the three presidencies, have given the most honourable testimony to the merits of all. But the Bengal sepoy has the advantage of a finer person and a more military air ; perhaps, however, it would be more correct to say, the sepoys of the Bengal army,

since the province which gives its name to the presidency does not furnish the soldiers, who are principally composed of high-caste men from the Upper Provinces, Rajpoots, Patans, and Moghuls of good family.

The lounging, dishevelled habits, produced by the climate, have assuredly a deteriorating effect upon the style and bearing of European officers in the Company's service. These gentlemen have certainly nothing of the Prussian school about them ; none of the upright, ramrod stiffness, which disciplinarians consider so essential, and which in Europe usually distinguishes a soldier from his fellow-citizens. The Madrassees, as they are called, pique themselves a little upon the carelessness of their dress, and when off duty, assume a nonchalant manner, and a neglect of the etiquette of military costume, which savours somewhat of affectation, and affords some sanction to the assumption of superiority on the part of the Bengal officer. It is said that at the Cape of Good Hope (a place much frequented by visitants in search of health from the three presidencies, all of whom are characterized by the general designation of Hindoo), the officer of the Madras army is known by the deranged or dilapidated state of his attire ; that it is not uncommon to see him lounging about in a jacket so much the worse for wear as not to possess its full complement of buttons. Women, who are very quick-sighted in such matters, perceive at a glance the least violation of military proprieties, and the lower classes especially are wont to express their opinion in no measured terms. A half-caste lady in Calcutta, considering herself aggrieved by an officer from the neighbouring

presidency, after exhausting every abusive epithet which the language could afford, wound up a striking peroration by calling him "a little Madras major:" the force of railing could no farther go. It is proper, however, to say that there are different opinions on the subject; by some it is averred that the Bengal troops, though finer and larger men than those of the coast army, are not so smart-looking under arms, and that they do not move or handle their muskets with the precision and soldier-like steadiness of the Madras native infantry. These conflicting testimonies serve to convince indifferent persons that there is no real superiority in either; the claims of the Bengal establishment rest principally upon the height and good looks of the natives of the Upper Provinces of Hindostan, who are usually tall, stout, handsome men. There will always be a little jealousy between the rival establishments; and as the Bengalese live in a style of splendour which their fellow-soldiers do not attempt, they assume a pre-eminence which is generally acceded to them.

Those who have been accustomed to the luxuries of the capital of British India, the trains of servants in waiting, and the princely accommodations of the houses, are apt to disparage the customs and modes of living at Madras; but the traveller surveys with delight the splendid architectural remains and picturesque beauties of southern India. The panorama of Madras, lately exhibited in London, afforded to its numerous visitants a striking and faithful representation of the military array of the fort, the glittering palace-like public offices, and the minarets, churches,

and pagodas, embosomed in trees, which line the surf-bound coast of this singular and truly oriental city. But the imposing air of grandeur and pomp produced by the magnificent dimensions, architectural ornaments, and, above all, the marble brightness of the shell-mortar with which the Government edifices are coated, is diminished, on a nearer approach, by the absence of the regular streets and squares, which give so much of a metropolitan air to the stately avenues of Calcutta. The roads, planted on either side with trees, the villas *chunamed* with the glittering material already mentioned, and nestling in gardens, where the richest flush of flowers is tempered by the grateful shade of umbrageous groves, leave nothing to be wished for that can delight the eye or enchant the imagination. Here are to be seen, in the most lavish abundance, the plume-like, broad-leaved plantain, the gracefully-drooping bamboo, the proud coronet of the coco, waving with every breeze, the fan-leaf of the still taller palm, the delicate areca, the obelisk-like aloe, and the majestic banian, with its drooping branches, the giant arms outspreading from a columnar and strangely convoluted trunk, and precipitating pliant fibrous strings, which plant themselves in the earth below, and add their support to the splendid canopy above them.

The climate of Madras is considered to be less sultry than that of Bengal; those stations which are situated on the highest ground of the table-land enjoy a very agreeable temperature. The large cantonment of Bangalore is three thousand feet above the level of the sea, and the thermometer rarely rises above 80°; but the duties of the civil and military servants of the presi-

dency often call them to less favoured places ; and those who have suffered under the prostrating effects of a Mysore fever, have no reason to rejoice that their destinies did not lead them to Bengal.

In spite, however, of its pestilential climate, there are few places in the Peninsula more attractive to a visitor than the scene of the splendid victory gained by the British arms in 1799. The island of Seringapatam, which is surrounded on every side by the Caverry, a wide and rapid river, to which the Carnatic owes its agricultural wealth, is a place of great beauty and fertility ; but the reminiscences connected with it are of a nature too overpowering to permit the mind to dwell upon minor circumstances.

The departure from every rule of honourable warfare in the cruel treatment of his British prisoners, together with many other acts of tyranny and oppression, have branded the name of Tippoo Saib with everlasting infamy ; yet, notwithstanding much that is wholly indefensible in his conduct, it may be doubted whether he deserves all the opprobrium which has been cast upon his character. A modern, and an unquestionable authority, assures us that Tippoo's government could not have been very oppressive, since his resources were almost inexhaustible, and the cities, towns, and villages of his dominions, with few and slight exceptions, were in a flourishing state. Notwithstanding the frequency of his wars, his accumulation of personal property was immense. He had, during a long series of years, maintained very large bodies of troops, kept up his fortresses, and replenished his treasury. His subjects were rich, and his army well-appointed and faithful.

The fortunate person by whose hand the son of Hyder met his death remains to this day unknown, nor has it ever been ascertained whether the jewels which adorned his person became the spoil of friends or foes. When the corpse was discovered, it was found divested of all its ornaments. He was known to wear a ruby ring constantly upon his finger, which he esteemed to be the finest in his treasury, and the value of the string of pearls, or rosary, about his neck, was almost incalculable. The gems of which it was composed were the largest and richest India could produce ; they had been the collection of many years, and were the pride of his dress. Whenever a pearl of extraordinary size and lustre was brought to him for sale, he became the purchaser, and strung it on this precious necklace, in the place of one of inferior value ; and as he never appeared without this favourite ornament, there is no doubt of its having fallen into the hands of some lucky adventurer, who concealed the knowledge of so great a prize. His turban was also always adorned with a jewel of price, but that had disappeared ; an amulet, powerless to save, alone was left upon an arm which had threatened the subversion of the British Government in India.

One cannot be surprised that the riches gained at the taking of Seringapatam should still be fresh in men's minds, and that, notwithstanding the scarcity of "barbaric pearl and gold," India should to this day be esteemed a sort of garden of Aladdin, where clustering rubies, the flashing diamond, and the changeful opal, court the passenger's acceptance. An enormous quantity of jewels found their way to

Europe after the capture of Seringapatam. The houses of the chief sirdars, as well as those of the shroffs, were completely pillaged. The terrified inmates of the zenanas, anxious only to preserve their lives, came forth with all their treasures, and offered their jewels as a ransom. Fortunately, the palace was not made the scene of indiscriminate plunder; it was secured in time, and its immense riches were thus preserved for more equal distribution to the conquering army. The treasures contained in this palace consisted of jewels, gold and silver plate, rich stuffs, valuable MSS., and various other articles of great price and rarity. The quantity of money discovered, though great in itself, was not commensurate with the expectations raised by the report of Tippoo's vast resources. It is supposed that much remains still concealed, although the confidence of the besieged not being shaken until the fortress had fallen into the possession of the enemy, little or no precaution was taken to secure property of any description. India still affords a fertile field for the treasure-seeker. In traversing the ruined portions of once-flourishing cities, destined by the fortunes of war to frequent changes of masters, it is impossible to avoid wishing for the divining rod, of which we read, to direct the search of the money-digger; for doubtless immense riches still lie buried where the terrors of the Moghul and the Mahratta have prevailed.

The enormous mass of wealth accumulated by Tippoo Saib, though hoarded up without regard to ornamental arrangement, and without being made subservient to the embellishments of the palace, were

registered with great care. The captors found every article labelled according to its entry in the corresponding catalogue. Very extensive buildings, including the greater part of the palace, were appropriated to the reception of the treasure; a series of quadrangles, surrounded by store-houses having open galleries above, were appropriated to those articles which were least susceptible of injury. The jewels, carefully deposited in coffers, were kept in large dark chambers, behind one of the halls of audience. The plate, both gold and silver, was preserved in the same manner. The jewellery was set in gold in the form of bracelets, rings, necklaces, plumes, aigrettes, sword-belts, &c., and the workmanship was not inferior to the value of the material. We have a record of one necklace, which seems to have been wrought by a hand not less cunning than that of the wondrous Florentine. It was composed, says Major Moor, of fifteen or twenty chains of gold, each link being a very small bunch of grapes, of most exquisite workmanship; the number of links or bunches of grapes must have amounted to many thousands, they were so minute. The chains were nearly five feet long, connected by a pair of splendid clasps of diamonds and rubies. The value placed upon it at Seringapatam, sixty pounds, fell infinitely short of its real worth, taking the workmanship into consideration. One of the galleries containing two *howdahs* made of solid silver; and some of the plate was richly inlaid with gold, and set with jewels.

Tippoo, it is said, whose love of hoarding was insatiable, passed the greater part of his leisure hours

in reviewing and examining the acquisitions of his successful ambition. His love of literature was not inferior to his love of wealth ; he possessed a large and curious library, arranged after his own fashion, in a manner little according with European ideas. The books were kept in chests, each volume having a separate wrapper, so that they were for the most part in excellent preservation. These books, it is supposed, must all have been collected by Tippoo himself, since his father was too illiterate to have possessed any taste for reading.

The garden-houses and pavilions of Tippoo Saib are now frequently occupied by European officers, whom military duty or curiosity leads to Seringapatam, and who, of course, receive the most courteous attentions from the heads of the reigning family. A large mansion in the Dowlut Baugh, amongst other decorations, is ornamented with a painting representing the defeat of Colonel Baillie ; in which the artist, more intent upon pleasing his patron than in giving a faithful delineation of the scene, has taken care not only to depict the conquering Hyder after the most triumphant fashion, but to exaggerate the disasters and distresses of the enemy. Nothing can be more wretched than the execution of this design ; but the colours are bright and gaudy, and the whole as fresh as when it delighted the eyes of the invader and his less fortunate son, the British Government not choosing to deface or remove this trophy of bygone days. Few persons can now indulge in a sojourn in the Dowlut Baugh without experiencing some injurious attack of disease ; the whole island

retains its fatal power over European constitutions, and from time immemorial it has only been the natives of the soil who could successfully resist the deleterious effects of the climate. We are told, that out of many thousand natives compulsorily brought by Hyder and his son from the Malabar coast, and forced to settle in the new territory, only five hundred survived at the end of ten years to relate the story of their tragic expulsion from their own homes; and five years sufficed to reduce the number of European officers and artificers in the sultan's service, imported from the Isle of France, from five hundred to twenty-five. Notwithstanding its comparative salubrity, the cemetery of the neighbouring station, Bangalore, is but too well filled with the victims to the fevers so prevalent in southern India.

Bangalore is rendered peculiarly interesting to the English visitant, from its having been selected as a place of confinement for many of the prisoners taken in the wars of Hyder and his son with the British Government. A large wheel for drawing water is still in existence, in a garden adjoining the palace of Hyder Ally, in the native fort, about two miles from the present cantonments, at which that despot, who was ignorant of every rule of honourable warfare, compelled his captives to work. During the reign of Tippoo Saib, upwards of twenty officers shared the same prison for a dreary interval of four years, the miseries of captivity being cruelly augmented by the continual expectation of death in its worst form. The little intelligence they could obtain of the state of affairs beyond their prison wall was conveyed to them

by a native butcher, who frequently enclosed a letter in the head of a sheep, which, being severed from the body, he flung into the prison. Suspicion fell upon this faithful fellow, but he would confess nothing, notwithstanding the attempt made to intimidate him by tying him to the mouth of a loaded gun. Immediately upon his release, he proceeded to perform the duties of his avocation, and undaunted by the recollection of previous peril, resorted to the old mode of communication, and beheading a sheep, whose teeth were tightly closed upon a letter, flung it with reckless daring amongst the assembled officers, who subsequently owed their lives to the determination which they evinced to resist the attempts made to intimidate them. Two of these prisoners still survive to tell the tale—the rest have gone to their graves: and it is melancholy to add, that several became the victims of indulgences by which they sought to indemnify themselves for the hardships and mortifications they had been made to undergo.

Bangalore, though not equalling in aspect the luxuriant though deleterious beauty of the adjacent territories, is prettily situated in a moderately-wooded and well-watered country; there are barracks for two King's regiments, one of cavalry and one of infantry; and in addition, the garrison consists of three Native Infantry and one Cavalry regiment, with a proportionate number of battalions of artillery, the requisite staff, &c.

Bangalore has always been distinguished, throughout the Madras presidency, for its festivities. It possesses very handsome assembly-rooms, and a theatre,

in which the amateur performances are often above par. These latter entertainments have been found so attractive, that persons, anxious to uphold the honour of the station, have been induced to make an authenticated report, by which it has been shewn that the number of representations of a popular piece, with reference to the bills of mortality in both places, has in the theatre at Bangalore equalled that of *Mother Goose* at Covent Garden. The fancy balls are upon a grand scale; and the very beautiful little theatre being at the extreme end of the assembly-rooms, and therefore easily thrown open when necessary, the effect of the whole is magnificent. No expense is spared upon these entertainments; the bands of the several regiments are in attendance, and a flourish of trumpets gives the glad summons to supper. When the society happens to be composed of choice spirits, amusements of this nature go off with great *éclat*. The superior size and loftiness of reception-rooms in India, render them much better adapted for large assemblages than those belonging to the same class of society in England; and even in the most sultry seasons, less inconvenience is sustained from the heat, the nights being always comparatively cool, and a free circulation of air secured by the multitude of open doors. The danger of failure is occasioned by the difficulty of getting the party to harmonize; dull, disagreeable people are to be found every where; and when these preponderate, the meeting, intended to be festive, must of course be “stale, flat, and unprofitable.”

During the cold season, the European residents of Bangalore amuse themselves with pic-nic parties, there

being numerous objects of curiosity in the vicinity to attract the visitant. There is nothing throughout Hindostan to equal the remains of southern India; the pagodas of Benares, and even those of Bindrabund and Muttra, are mean in comparison to the splendid temples which are spread along the plains of Mysore and the Carnatic. Those in the neighbourhood of Bangalore do not yield in magnificence to the most celebrated pagodas of the Peninsula, and they are the favourite resort of all who possess any taste for architectural beauty; while, to the less intellectual portion of the community, the music, dancing, the banquet, and perhaps above all the feats of jugglers, offer high gratification.

The Madras jugglers are famous all over the world; the exploits of Ramo Samee are still fresh in the recollection of the inhabitants of London; and though the exhibition of similar acts of dexterity is often more extraordinary than pleasing, the display of legerdemain in India would almost induce the belief that the age of necromancy had not passed away. A man who, in 1828, seated himself in the air without any apparent support, excited as much interest and curiosity as the automaton chess-player who astonished all Europe a few years ago; drawings were exhibited in all the Indian papers, and various conjectures formed respecting the secret of his art, but no very satisfactory discovery was made of the means by which he effected an apparent impossibility. The bodies of the Madras jugglers are so lithe and supple, as to resemble those of serpents rather than men. An artist of this kind will place a ladder upright on the ground, and wind

himself in and out through the rungs until he reaches the top, descending in the same manner, keeping the ladder, which has no support whatever, in a perpendicular position. Some of the most accomplished tumblers will spring over an enormous elephant, or five camels placed abreast; and in rope-dancing they are not to be outdone by any of the wonders of Sadler's Wells.

Swallowing the sword is a common operation, even by those who are not considered to be the most expert; and they have various other exploits with naked weapons of a most frightful nature. A woman,—for the females are quite equal to the men in these kind of feats,—will dip the point of a sword in some black pigment, the hilt is then fixed firmly in the ground, and after a few whirls in the air, the *artiste* takes off a portion of the pigment with her eye-lid. A sword and four daggers are placed in the ground, with their edges and points upwards, at such a distance from each other as to admit of a man's head between them; the operator then plants a scymetar firmly in the ground, sits down behind it, and at a bound throws himself over the scymetar, pitching his head exactly in the centre between the daggers; and, turning over, clears them and the sword. Walking over the naked edges of sabres seems to be perfectly easy; and some of these people will stick a sword in the ground, and step upon the point in crossing over it. A more agreeable display of the lightness and activity, which would enable the performers to tread over flowers without bending them, is shewn upon a piece of thin linen cloth stretched out slightly in the hands of four

persons, which is traversed without ruffling it, or forcing it from the grasp of the holders. The lifting of heavy weights with the eyelids is another very disgusting exhibition. Some of the optical deceptions are exceedingly curious, and inquirers are to this day puzzled to guess how plants and flowers can be instantaneously produced from seeds.

The Madras jugglers travel to all parts of India, but it is not often that the most celebrated are to be found at a distance from the theatre of their education. Snake-charmers are common everywhere ; they belong to a peculiar caste of Hindoos, and though their reputation is upon the wane, they still excite considerable curiosity in southern India. They pretend to be enabled to handle the most venomous serpents with impunity, by means of the snake-stone, a smooth, flat substance, the size of a tamarind stone, and nearly the same shape : this is said to be extracted from the head of the animal ; and though the fallacy of the idea of the concealment of a precious jewel in a serpent's head has been ably refuted by one of the contributors to the *Asiatic Researches*, the opinion still prevails that some of the stones vended by the cunning manufacturers are genuine.*

* In Major Moor's very pleasing volume of *Oriental Fragments*, are some details respecting snake-catching, snake-stones, and the tricks of the *sampooris*, or snake-catchers. He describes the process employed by one of these artists to charm a snake from his (the Major's) dwelling, and to extract the stone, apparently from the jaws of the reptile. He proceeds : " A clever Parsee servant had reminded us that we had lately lost many fowls, adding that he should not wonder if there was another samp

It is certainly entertaining to a stranger to watch the effect of music upon the serpent tribe. Very well authenticated accounts are upon record of their being charmed from their hiding-places by the sound of a pipe or flageolet; and those which have been tamed are constantly exhibited dancing to the melody produced by this simple instrument. They stand erect upon their tails, and move about, bending their heads, and undulating their bodies in accordance with the measure. The *cobra capella* is the dancing-snake of

somewhere near the fowl house, Thither we went; and, after the usual ceremonials, sure enough another was caught. I smelt a rat; and, causing the exulting catcher to bring his writhing captive into the veranda, watched narrowly the lithotomic process. At the proper moment, I, to the great astonishment of my friend Forbes and the other spectators, seized the snakeless hand of the operator; and there found, to his dismay, perdue in his well-closed palm, the intended-to-be-extracted stone.

“The fellow made a full and good-humoured confession of the trick, as touching the second snake and the concealed stone; but stoutly maintained that he fairly caught the first; and that, although the semi-transparent, amber-like stones were altogether fictions, the opaque concretion was sometimes, though not often, found in the reptile’s head; and that it really had some of the virtues ascribed to it. He good-humouredly blamed me for exposing him—hinting that credulity was the easy parent of craft; and somewhat slyly said something Hudibrastically equivalent to the assertion that

—— the pleasure is as great
In being cheated, as to cheat.”

Major Moor brought many of these stones, and although, as they multiplied on his hands, he began to suspect that “he was not one of the wisest men in the world;” he still cannot entirely shake off the belief that these stones are actually taken out of the reptile’s head, and have some anti-poisonous virtue.

the East, and the production of the snake-stone is exclusively confined to this species. There is not, it is said, much difficulty in extracting the poison of a serpent, which is contained in a very small reservoir, running along the palate of the mouth, and passing out at each fang: the natives are supposed to be very dexterous in forcing their captives to eject this venom, and are then enabled to handle them without the least danger. Some persons, however, well acquainted with the habits of snake-charmers, deny that they extract the poison, and attribute the impunity with which they handle these dangerous reptiles to their accurate knowledge of the temper and disposition of the animal, and their ready method of soothing down irritation. The natives boast the possession of various antidotes to the bite of a snake, and often pretend to have imbibed the venom and effected a cure. There is a plant which goes by the name of *chandraca*, in which considerable confidence is placed; and arsenic, which enters very largely into the composition of the celebrated Tanjore pill, is often employed as a counteracting power. Volatile alkalis are most generally tried by European practitioners, and very often prove successful; but the different degrees of strength in the venom of snakes render it doubtful whether in the worst cases they would have any beneficial effect. Some medical men aver, that the bite of a *cobra capella* in full vigour, and in possession of all its poisonous qualities, is as speedily fatal as a pistol-ball; and that it is only when this poison is weakened by expenditure, that medicine can be of any avail.

CHAPTER XV.

INDIGO-PLANTERS.

A PASSAGE has been retained in the published journal of the late Bishop Heber, which, very unintentionally on the part of that estimable prelate, is calculated to throw considerable discredit upon a large body of highly respectable men. That Bishop Heber had just grounds, in the conduct of some individuals, for the vote of censure which he passed, there can be no doubt, for no one who has ever been in India can have failed to meet with instances of the most profligate conduct on the part of the cultivators of indigo. But his assertions were of too sweeping a nature; he judged of the whole from a very small portion of the community; and, had he lived to correct the errors of his first impressions, he would have modified, if not entirely suppressed, an opinion which was certainly too hastily formed.

Excepting at large stations, in which various manufacturers and shop-keepers have established themselves, the only Europeans, not belonging to the Company's service, hitherto settled in the interior of Bengal have been the indigo-planters. There are very wide distinctions amongst this class of persons, and many differ as much from each other in manners and acquirements, as they do in colour and country. We find Europeans and Indo-Britons, of all shades

and grades, from the most polished, refined, benevolent and urbane, to the most brutal and demoralized, rendering it sometimes difficult to say whether the foreign adventurers, or the children of the soil, are the best entitled to either character: many of the Indo-Britons being distinguished by every excellence that can adorn society, and many of the Europeans being equally conspicuous for the exhibition of every vice. All indigo-planters, however, especially under the old *régime*, had to contend against prejudice; none possessed rank or station in the country, and, when settled at a distance from Calcutta, (the only place in which mercantile pursuits, unconnected with the Company's trade, were regarded with any respect) were looked upon in a dubious sort of light, and tolerated, in the circles where they were found, rather than considered acknowledged members of them. A little of this aristocratic feeling had been probably imbibed by the good bishop in his intercourse with the great; and, though it cannot be denied that he possessed an enlarged and liberal mind, which soared above the petty distinctions of society, he seems to have too hastily adopted opinions respecting a considerable body, which could only apply to a few individuals.

In some places,—Tirhoot for instance,—the indigo-planters live in tolerably large communities, and in many they are settled at visiting distance from each other, or the civil and military residents of some neighbouring station; but a great number live almost wholly isolated. The traveller, journeying through some remote and unfrequented place, often comes

suddenly upon a splendid mansion, surrounded by stately gardens: should the owner, probably a bachelor, be at home, he is welcomed with the greatest hospitality, and finds in this lonely retreat every luxury that taste can suggest, or wealth purchase. In the absence of the master of the house, the servants endeavour to supply his place; the stranger is invited to walk in the gardens or repose in the long suites of apartments which compose the mansion.

Though the European houses in the provinces of India are frequently encompassed by park-like grounds, these are not secured, as in England, by close palings, gates, and porters' lodges; there probably is a fence of some kind, a low mud wall, or a hedge of aloe or prickly pear, usually insufficient to keep out cattle, and in this respect they differ widely from the domiciles of the rich natives, which are always so surrounded by high walls as, in many instances, to assume the appearance of fortresses. In dangerous places, where ravines afford harbour for wild beasts, or where robbers abound, whole villages are sometimes inclosed by a high bare wall of unbaked mud, a protection which, while highly unpicturesque, is interesting from its singularity, especially when occurring upon a bare plain, the ravines before mentioned being usually fissures broken in the surface. Europeans, on the contrary, appear to seek neither privacy nor security; and, while in England we only obtain distant glimpses of mansions from a favourable point upon the road, in India we pass the very threshold of some splendid palace, and are (or were, for this, like other features of Anglo-Indian manners, may have

undergone a very recent change) almost certain of finding a warm welcome within its walls, or, in the absence of the owner, permission to stroll about, indulging in those day-dreams which haunt the imaginative mind, and find such ample food when wandering alone amid sequestered places. Silence and solitude are not, however, always the characteristics of a secluded indigo-factory; the traveller may fortunately chance to meet a large and agreeable family domiciled amid the woods and wilds, young and beautiful women shedding radiance on the scene.

The wives and daughters of the superior class of indigo-planters rank amid the best educated and most elegant women of India; and, in the article of dress, they frequently outshine all their competitors; for, possessing greater wealth, they are better enabled to indulge in expensive wardrobes. Notwithstanding the admission contained in a preceding chapter, that many individual toilettes in India are perfect, the disquisitions upon dress have not satisfied those, who, either receiving impressions of India in its best days, or, blessed with the means of consulting taste and splendour in their apparel, are disinclined to allow that the majority of their fair companions are not, or have not been, equally fortunate. By far the greater number of the European residents in India are decidedly poor, and as, after a certain point, there is no possibility of making further retrenchment, the necessary expenditure for the common comforts of life leaves them little or nothing to devote to show. Very few of the military classes,—and it is they who, in the Upper Provinces, chiefly compose the society,—

—are in possession of liberal incomes ; the civilians are too widely scattered to give a decided tone to the manners, and as many of them are very deeply in debt, they are not always able to assume a superiority in outward appearance. It may be admitted that the ladies of India dress as well as those belonging to the same class at home ; we will even allow them a superiority ; but, when all this is granted, the general effect of their appearance will not equal that which is to be seen in capitals possessing enormous wealth, and where manufacturers, retail dealers, and milliners, are striving by every means in their power to render the luxuries of dress, necessities amongst the fair part of the community, who are so easily tempted to such expenditure. When the female society of India was much smaller than it is at present, and when husbands and fathers commanded more extensive resources than are now at their disposal, in all probability, female apparel was very magnificent ; but times are sadly changed, and though a good deal of money may still be expended, it is quite impossible that it should be laid out to the same advantage in Calcutta, as in London or Paris, where, even when the colonial markets are overstocked, there is infinitely more choice and variety in the articles offered for sale. Were we to concede to the metropolis of Bengal the same advantages as those enjoyed by European capitals, still there would be the society of the Upper Provinces to be taken into consideration, and it is not too much to say that scarcely one lady in ten, composing it, possesses the means of procuring a single dress throughout the year, from the fashionable

milliners of Calcutta. Upon inquiry at the shew-rooms of the principal *modistes* of the presidency, respecting the ultimate destination of their importations from Paris, we have been informed that, by far the greater portion are purchased for the ladies belonging to the families of indigo-planters. As these, for the most part, are condemned to inhabit remote and solitary wilds, persons frequently meet with expense and elegance of attire where they might seem the least to be expected.

Although most Anglo-Indians are too well accustomed to solitude and solitary travelling, to find it particularly irksome, few are insensible to the pleasure of an unexpected introduction to agreeable society; but it is only those who have journeyed long and drearily, without companionship of any kind, who can truly estimate the delight afforded by a welcome into the bosom of some charming family, every individual member being equally ready to give and to receive pleasure from the accidental circumstance which brings a new acquaintance to their dwelling. Notwithstanding their great seclusion from the world, the unmarried ladies of an indigo-planter's family are seldom doomed to waste their sweetness on the desert air, during any very protracted period; their claims to admiration become noised abroad, frequently raising a romantic degree of interest in the hearts of those who have had no opportunity of seeing and judging for themselves; a distant journey is frequently the consequence, and in many instances the affair ends by the adventurous suitor bringing a bride away in triumph.

The houses belonging to the superior classes of

indigo-planters, are well-furnished with books. A library is necessary to beguile the tedium which, in a greater or lesser degree, must fall to the lot of all who can only take pleasure in refined amusements; the life of an indigo-planter being one of alternate toil and idleness, of great anxiety or of dearth of interest. The watching the crop, the necessary superintendence in person, leading to great exposure during the heat of the day,—the cares, mental and personal, attendant on the process of manufacture,—a process depending for success upon peculiar states of the atmosphere,—are followed by intervals, in which there is nothing to be done, and during which the owner of the factory must draw entirely upon his own resources for the employment of his leisure hours. The fluctuations and vicissitudes which mark an indigo-planter's life, resemble those of a gambler, and the excitement he feels is nearly equally strong. Immense fortunes are sometimes made in one productive season, and frequently, when great success has induced more extensive speculations, some perverse circumstance will entail a total failure, reducing the eager expectant to ruin, and obliging him to begin the world again, with blighted hopes and reduced physical powers. Others toil on, during a considerable number of years, without averaging more than a sufficiency for the maintenance of a family; while many are merely agents, or junior partners, working hard, with a very distant prospect of advantage to themselves, for the benefit of some great firm in Calcutta. Indigo forms the resource of multitudes, who have gone out to India with very different views: nautical men, writers to the signet,

merchants, and even missionaries, sitting down, after various disappointments, to the management of some remote factory.

The soil most favourable to the cultivation of indigo is one which is rich and moist; it is essential that the ground be well tilled, and thoroughly cleared of weeds. The seed, which somewhat resembles gunpowder, is sown at the commencement of the rainy season. In favourable weather, the plant will appear above-ground in the course of three or four days; it is ripe and ready for cutting at the end of two months, not being allowed to exhaust itself in flowering. This is a very anxious period for the cultivator, for the crop is liable to accidents which no human ingenuity or foresight can remedy or prevent: the plant is apt to become suddenly dry, and to wither away; or, all at once, a peculiar species of caterpillar makes its appearance, and will destroy, in the course of a day and night, the most favourable prospects which luxuriant fields could offer. As this catastrophe is of frequent recurrence, no one can reckon with any degree of security upon his harvest, and the misfortune experienced by so many adventurers, has rendered it a common saying in India, that an indigo-planter may retire to his bed a rich man, and rise in the morning utterly ruined. It is necessary to gather in the indigo, after it has been cut, with great care, the leaves being covered with a delicate bloom or farina, which if shaken off would deteriorate their value. It is said that, in India, the cultivators use the leaves only, which renders the dye very superior to that of America, where the whole plant is thrown into the steeping vats.

These are usually miniature tanks, lined with masonry ; they are filled with a sufficient quantity of water to cover the plant ; the fermentation commences in a few hours, and continues during an indefinite period, in which it must be closely watched, the excellence of the dye mainly depending upon the fermentations being stopped at the precise time. While in this state of effervescence, great quantities of froth are thrown up, the liquor becomes exceedingly hot, and to a passer-by the effluvia it exhales is any thing but agreeable. When the proper moment for drawing the liquor off has been ascertained,—and though there are various tests, experience is found to be the best guide,—it is conveyed into another vat, where it is strongly agitated by means of wooden implements of a peculiar form, made for the purpose. This is done to separate the true dye from the salt of the plant ; the former is precipitated to the bottom, and here again it is necessary to be well-skilled in the process, in order to pursue it only to the precise moment, in which the mixture should be allowed to subside. The water is then drawn off, and, after the indigo has remained a short time longer to settle, it is taken out and, being drained in cloth bags, is dried gradually in the shade, in shallow wooden boxes. While it is still damp, it is cut into small cakes, of an inch square, and, when in a fit state, it is packed either in barrels, or in coarse linen, covered with a skin, which is rendered impervious to damp. The indigo manufactured in India is of various degrees of excellence, partly arising from soil and situation, and partly from the care taken in its cultivation. Its good quality is said

to depend in a great measure upon the age of the plant ; if cut before it has come to maturity, it will yield less in quantity, but the quality will be much finer. It is necessary to keep it very free from weeds, and to attend to the state of the weather at the period of gathering ; for, if cut upon a dry day, the plant, which otherwise would last for two years, will die at once. The liquid changes colour two or three times during the progress of fermentation, being at first green, then violet, and gradually assuming the deep blue, which proves that the first stage of the process has been completed.

At the houses of the superior indigo-planters, little or no indication of the calling of the owner is to be seen ; his mansion is distinct from the factory, and the whole establishment manifests the taste and refinement of the inhabitant. But all do not boast the same degree of elegance. Rivulets of the deepest blue, ragged retainers with their blue skins,—for the skin always imbibes the colour of the manufacture,—scantly covered with cloths of the same tint, exhibiting itself in every direction, frequently mark the premises of the *leal-wallah* (blue fellow), as he is termed by the natives, locating in the wilderness. The house, in these instances, is large, ungainly, and barn-like ; the waste, dignified by the name of a garden, is intersected by long rows of sheds, necessary for the manufacture, and sunken vats appear at intervals, in which the plant is soaking. Within side, a sluttish kind of plenty reigns ; the apartments have been handsomely furnished, but the furniture has suffered from neglect, and now exhibits various stages of dilapidation ; rat-

holes, tenanted by numerous families, yawn in the walls, and the dogs repose without ceremony upon the chairs and sofas. Should the master be Scottish, Irish, or French, the peculiar manners of his country will be far more conspicuous than when you find the same individual living in close community with other Anglo-Indians, where, generally speaking, the whole society fall into one particular fashion ; the method of cookery, the choice of food, the hours, and the domestic arrangements, all savour of the parent soil, and we seem to step at once from an Indian jungle into some well-remembered haunt, perchance amid the Scottish highlands, or upon the banks of the Shannon, or in some old town in Normandy. Living almost alone, the same habits and usages will be observed, to which the exile has been accustomed in his early youth ; he finds no motive for the adoption of foreign manners, and he makes those of his forefathers assimilate with a new soil and a new hemisphere.

Occasionally, the house of an indigo-planter affords the most frightful picture of desolation and decay imaginable ; its mouldering, weather-stained walls and falling roof, yielding an inadequate shelter from the elements ; while the large comfortless apartments of the interior, the damp, and dirt, and squalor, which prevail within, render the smallest hut, which is clean, well-swept, and in good repair, a far more desirable abode. No habitation in England, however neglected, which is capable of accommodating a tenant, can at all compare with a dirty ill-conducted European residence in India. Portions of the floors, literally ploughed up by white ants, are quite as dusty as the

public-roads, while others, damp and slimy, produce plentiful crops of the fungus tribe. Where the stuccoed brick-work of the verandahs and porticoes has given way, the places of pillars and roofs are supplied with bamboos and thatch. Some of the large venetians hang upon one rusty hinge ; others have fallen prostrate, and a *jaump*, formed of coarse matting, propped up with a bamboo, furnishes security to the doors and windows from sun and rain. Most of the latter which remain are unglazed, or have only three panes left out of the number which formerly adorned them, the rest being pannelled up to the top with rough unsightly pieces of wood. Native charpoys, or bedsteads, do the duty of sofas ; the mats, if any be left, are ragged and worn away ; the tables are rickety and the chairs worm-eaten. The glass shades belonging to the lamps have been broken, and, at night, a sudden gust of wind will extinguish all the lights : an exploit which, by way of variety, is sometimes performed by a cloud of insects in a most effectual manner, these intruders at all times surrounding the unguarded tapers in such multitudes, as to make it impossible either to read or to pursue any other employment. Yet there are numbers, both European and Indo-Briton, who are quite content with such a residence, and never dream of giving themselves the trouble of putting it into better condition. Custom has reconciled them to their mode of life, and they have no idea of the horror with which a stranger, better acquainted with the habits of civilized society, surveys the dismal scene. Poverty is not always the accompaniment and cause of all this desolation ; it frequently hap-

pens that, while the elegancies of life are disregarded, there is no scarcity of grosser luxuries ; a plentiful dinner will smoke upon a board covered with a ragged table-cloth, or perchance, not graced with any table-cloth at all ; Claret and Sauterne will appear, as well as beer and brandy, and the lady, though she may indulge in a shawl and a dressing-gown, will still adorn her person with trinkets of value.

Now and then, a mansion, differing from any yet described, will exhibit itself to view ; a small neat bungalow, furnished with all things needful, but with nothing shewy or superfluous, and tenanted either by a quiet couple, or some grave and steady bachelor, accustomed to look solitude in the face, and to brave its severest inflictions. This person's residence may be so insulated, as to remain for months,—nay years,—unknown to the European inhabitants of a station within forty or fifty miles, or even less : it is discovered by some accident, such as the illness of a traveller, seeking shelter at a neighbouring village, and directed by the natives, who are always unwilling to have the responsibility of a sick European on their hands, to a house where he can be better and more carefully attended. It was not until the third year of his residence at an outpost, that the officer commanding learned, through the medium of a friend who had been detained by illness upon the road in a journey from Cawnpore, that a recluse, hermitizing still deeper in the jungle, possessed a library which offered a convenient exchange for the oft-read volumes so long the solace of his retirement. A correspondence ensued, and both parties derived benefit from the establish-

ment of a lending and borrowing system. Where families travelling are unsupplied with medicine, those who are acquainted with the resources of the country, immediately inquire, in the event of any attack of illness, whether there is an indigo-planter in the neighbourhood, and, if they are so fortunate as to be answered in the affirmative, send without ceremony for anything they want, the virtue of hospitality being practised amongst this class in all its amplitude.

Few Europeans have ever travelled in India without being largely indebted to the kindness of the cultivators of indigo. At one period, during the rains, a party, of which the writer formed one, were detained in a budgerow, by contrary winds, behind a bluff promontory, abutting into the Ganges near Rajmhal. There was no tracking-path, and the contemplation of a protracted sojourn in a place very ill-calculated to afford accommodation for travellers, excited no very agreeable images in the fancy. The scenery around, though very beautiful, bore a wild and savage aspect, the only human habitations consisting of a few clusters of native huts, and some old Mussulmanee tombs, the abode of squalid-looking faqueers. On the first day of our detention, we observed a European, at a little distance, superintending the despatch of a train of bullock-carts, loaded with indigo; but he did not appear again upon the scene. After a few days had passed, we began to entertain a very well-grounded apprehension, that we should see the end of our larder before we could procure a further supply. The village being entirely inhabited by

Hindoos, we could not obtain either fowls or eggs, and it was only the coarsest kinds of grain which could be purchased in the bazaar. The river was in too restless a state to admit of fishing, and, fortunately for us, our washerman could not find any water in a proper condition for the exercise of his calling. We had by this time forgotten the indigo-planter, but were reminded of his vicinity by our anxious domestic, who asked for a note requesting permission for him to wash his clothes in the tank belonging to this gentleman's establishment. The note was written, and away went the dobee. This man happened to be a particularly active, intelligent fellow, and very anxious about the comfort of the family he served. It appeared that, without the slightest instructions from us, he reported the lamentable state of affairs at the budgerow, how we were upon short allowance of a fowl *per diem*, and how, after sending in several directions, for twenty miles round, little or nothing could be obtained. These representations aroused the benevolent feelings of the indigo-planter, who had been confined to his house by illness from the very period we had seen him exposing himself to the damp steamy atmosphere of the clearing up of a day in the rains. The low grounds in the neighbourhood of the place in which we lay moored being all flooded, we were deprived of the advantage of the evening walks to the old Mussulmanee tombs before-mentioned, which we had taken on our first arrival, and were obliged to be contented with a survey of the country from the deck of the budgerow. The return of the washerman, in the dearth of other objects of interest, was an event of

some importance, more especially as he had been told that there were alligators lurking in the shallow waters, which it was dangerous to pass on foot. We observed him at a distance carrying his basket of linen on his head, and accompanied by two other persons, who did not appear to be empty-handed. Upon a nearer approach, we discovered that one of these people carried a large fish, and the other a basket of vegetables. The prospect of so welcome an addition to the repast preparing for us, and which, to confess the truth, was of a meagre description, proved very agreeable; but we were further delighted by a polite message, intimating that we should receive a supply of bread and butter on the morrow. Full of gratitude, we felt anxious to evince it in something better than words; we therefore collected all the newspapers we had received since our departure from Calcutta, and some duplicate copies of entertaining books, which we despatched with a note of thanks. The next morning, according to promise, the bread and butter arrived, and with it a dozen live ducks, together with many obliging expressions of regret, that an attack of fever prevented the donor from paying his respects. The wind changed before our benefactor, for such he must be termed, recovered, and we never met with him afterwards. Upon another occasion, when travelling with a female companion only, who was newer to the country than myself, the shallowness of the river obliged us to put into Bogwangolah, instead of proceeding, as we had intended, to Moorshedabad, from which place we were twenty miles distant. We sent off a letter to apprise our friends at that station of

our situation, but it appeared that it never reached its destination. There was little or nothing to be had for money of the Hindoos of the village; but, having now the advantage of a little experience, I made no scruple to write to an indigo-planter in the neighbourhood, and to ask his assistance in procuring bearers, and something for us to eat. He complied most readily with the request, and on the arrival of my friend's husband, who had heard a rumour of our situation, sent an elephant to assist in the conveyance of the party. He also was confined to his bed with fever at the time, but I had subsequently the pleasure of meeting him in Calcutta, and of offering my thanks in person for the attentions he had shewn me when so much in need of them. He has since fallen a victim to the insalubrity of the climate, which, though country-born, he could not brave with impunity.

No set of men are more liable to the various maladies incident to constant exposure to the weather, than indigo-planters. Their wealth, when they do gain it, is hardly earned; and their lives, though apparently luxurious, are frequently subject to great privations. Many of these persons are bachelors, not on account of the expense of maintaining a wife, but from an unwillingness to expose a female to the numerous infelicities which must be endured in remote places. Occasionally, they diversify their solitude by visits to the presidency, or some large station; they are frequently keen and active sportsmen, but even hunting and shooting will scarcely serve to fill up the leisure of a life which, though laborious during one period of the

year, is for the most part monotonous in the extreme. The cultivation of indigo seems, in many respects, to be better adapted to Indo-Britons than to Europeans ; the former have no recollections of home to contrast with a foreign, and perchance a dismal scene ; their constitutions are better suited to the climate than those of exiles pining for their native land, and they fall more easily into the habits of the natives. The estimable portion of indigo-planters are amiable, contemplative men, frank, hospitable, and generous, in a very high degree, and though able to endure an almost companionless solitude, ready to welcome the stranger, and to enter freely into society whenever an opportunity is afforded. Their taste for reading has already been mentioned ; it is sometimes united with literary pursuits, and the contributions of many to the periodicals of the presidencies are frequently of no mean order of merit. There are, however, some very different characters to be found amongst the cultivators of the precious weed, which has turned to gold in so many hands. Lawless and profligate ruffians may be met with, ever at war with each other or with the native planters, whom, if other means of competition fail, they will attack in the night, cutting and taking forcible possession of the crops, which may be better than their own. These worthies trust to all sorts of false swearing, on the part of their retainers, to elude the consequences of such exploits in a court of law ; none of the people whom they employ entertaining the slightest scruple at perjury. Occasionally, the most frightful circumstances take place, and the Supreme Court of Calcutta has been occupied by trials for murders perpetrated in open

day, and which, though matter of public notoriety, have seldom been brought home to the principals. The evidence produced upon such occasions affords a fearful picture of the abandoned profligacy of the mode of life adopted by coarse-minded, unprincipled Europeans, or ill-educated Indo-Britons. These men contrive to engraft the vices of the natives upon those inherited from the parent stock, practising the virtues of neither ; and it is only when some desperate act brings them under the cognizance of the magistracy, that the shuddering world is made acquainted with their crimes. The history of some of these people is both curious and appalling ; they have come out to India, or have been cast accidentally on its shores, after a rough journey through life, with hearts hardened and tempers soured by adversity and disappointment. The charge of some small indigo factory offers the only resource, and they plunge at once into the jungle, where, unfettered by the restraints imposed by civilized society, associating only with the lowest orders of natives, whom they look upon as beasts of burthen, they abandon themselves to every description of vice. An immoderate indulgence in ardent spirits, and the habit of considering themselves masters of all they survey, aggravate the natural fierceness of their dispositions ; they are ripe and ready for the commission of any outrage, and their wretched dependents too often fall a sacrifice to their brutality. Murders of this kind are easily hushed up, when the petty tyrant lives beyond the cognizance of European neighbours. The natives of India have not, as yet, been made to understand that they render themselves acces-

sories after the fact, by neglecting to report a crime of which they have obtained information, and to secure the perpetrator. Inquests do not sit upon the bodies of all persons who may be suspected of having perished by a violent death ; and unless there should be some party deeply interested in the punishment of the offender, the affair is seldom brought before the district judge. Should the neighbouring *darogha*, or police officer, hear of it, there is not often much difficulty in bribing him to silence ; and thus it sometimes happens, that the most frightful crimes are committed with impunity.

It chanced, that two European indigo-planters, resembling each other very closely in their habits, manners, and mode of life, were near neighbours, and for a considerable period lived together in the utmost harmony. Some occurrence, however, which did not transpire, happened to change this friendship into the most deadly enmity ; and, while one of the parties was seated in his own house, not apprehending the slightest danger, the other, attended by a multitude of armed retainers, came up to the door, dragged him forth, and forcibly conveying him to a little distance, either murdered him with his own hands, or instigated his followers to commit the deed. The servants of the unfortunate sufferer gave the alarm ; many were witnesses of the acts of violence by which he sunk overpowered to the ground ; and, upon their representations, the principal and several of his abettors were apprehended. According to the Mohamedan and Hindu law, no persons can be convicted of murder unless the body of the victim be produced ; in this

instance, care had been taken to dispose of it so completely, that the natives engaged in the affair could only be punished for riot and assault, and sent to work upon the roads. The principal was dealt with in a different manner, being indicted capitally before the Supreme Court of Calcutta, and tried for his life. No one for an instant could doubt this man's guilt; but the ingenuity of his counsel, in baffling and contradicting the testimony against him, and the gap in the evidence occasioned by the concealment of the body, procured an acquittal, and he was returned again upon society.

In a very interesting little volume, published a few years ago, entitled *Naufragus*, some details will be found, which afford a very correct representation of the mode of life and conduct of those indigo-planters who scruple at nothing in the furtherance of any guilty pursuit. The romance attached to this narrative has made many persons suppose that it is altogether of a fictitious nature, whereas the whole is a veritable history of the life and adventures of a singularly amiable young man,* who at an early period of his life was sent to seek his fortune in the world. Many persons in Bengal are still living to corroborate his account of an indigo-planter, who did not scruple to incense a whole population against him, by forcibly carrying off the bride of a brahmin, as she was proceeding to the home of her husband. Money, that grand panacea

* The name of the author of *Naufragus*, Moffat James Horne, is not generally known; perhaps no work ever published has presented a truer picture of the romance of real life.

for all the ills and outrages of life, prevented him from falling a sacrifice to Hindu vengeance ; but others have not escaped so well.

Though not possessing any settled rank, indigo-planters, of gentlemanly habits and respectable conduct, have, at least during a very considerable period, been freely admitted to the vice-regal court. In the Upper Provinces, they are invariably estimated according to their merits, and the society being smaller, the intercourse with those who are of native descent is much more close and frequent than in Calcutta, where Indo-Britons and Europeans do not mingle much together. A considerable number of indigo-planters, who have either factories at a short distance, or have retired altogether, are settled at the seat of government. They inhabit very handsome houses, and see a great deal of company : these gentlemen are chiefly Indo-Britons, and the few Europeans who are occasionally entertained at their parties, are literally astonished by the multitude of dark beauties with which they are surrounded : wealth and hospitality abound, and though there may be some slight prejudices in the breasts of those who pique themselves upon the untainted hue of their skin, the Eurasian community have little else to contend against in their intercourse with society. Many feel deeply aggrieved at their inadmissibility to offices of public trust and emolument, and probably the rising discontent may occasion the government some inconvenience at a subsequent period ; at present, however, the murmurings of the community find vent in the Demosthenian oratory of the Town-hall.

CHAPTER X.

GRIFFINS.

How the name of the winged monster of classic fable came to be applied to the newly-arrived European in India, nobody can tell with any degree of certainty. The origin of the term is quite as obscure as that of *blue-stockings*, and quite as inappropriate to the class of persons whom it is intended to designate, there being as little analogy between ignorance and a griffin, as between learning and cerulean hose. The soubriquet, by whomsoever first established, is now universally attached to persons who are unacquainted with the modes and customs adopted in Anglo-Indian society. A year is allowed for initiation into the somewhat strange usages and manners which it has pleased the European residents of the three presidencies to sanction and to follow; if at the end of that period silly and unadvised persons should transgress these rules and regulations, or should not possess sufficient tact to disguise their ignorance or dislike of them, they become confirmed "griffins;" the term is then applied in contempt, and a man who is said never to have been out of his griffinage, during a long residence in India, must be supposed to be a very obtuse and impracticable person. Certainly, a year at least is necessary to initiate people, possessing something more than moderate capacities, in the strange ways and odd

customs with which they are expected to comply ; especially as they have very little instruction from their friends and associates, who seem to derive great amusement from the blunders and mistakes made by new comers, whom they persecute with as little mercy as the Arimaspians, in olden time, did their prototypes, the Gryphons. Nothing, indeed, short of inspiration, can prevent a stranger from being the subject of ridicule to old residents ; great quickness of observation, and ready dexterity in getting out of a difficulty, will effect much ; but they must make up their minds to be laughed at, on account of errors which it is perfectly impossible to avoid.

One of the great difficulties which a griffin has to encounter is that of comprehending the difference of castes amongst his servants ; he runs the risk of bringing himself into contempt with the natives in two ways ; one by insisting upon their doing what their religion and peculiar calling forbid them to do ; the other by suffering himself to be imposed upon by low-caste people, who are fond of assuming consequence, and often pretend to be fastidious about things which belong to their particular department. Such mere trifles are made matters of importance, that it is exceedingly difficult for the best-bred and most delicately-minded person to avoid giving their native servants occasion to call their good manners in question. For instance ; if, in very hot weather, ladies or gentlemen are desirous to dip their hands frequently into a finger-glass, the water must be emptied every time by a servant in waiting, and should this practice not be complied with, the servant would not scruple

to give his master or mistress a finger-glass in which another person has washed. Natives do not or will not perceive the distinction; they think both equally gross and unclean, and entertain the greatest disgust for those who could so pollute themselves. There are native customs equally offensive to Europeans, which must be borne with, because no impropriety is attached to them by those by whom they are practised.

People who go to India young, have a great advantage in the opportunity of acquiring an insight into the manners and institutions of the people with whom they associate, and of learning what has been rejected and what has been retained by the European portion of the community. A griffin is constantly erring in these latter points. He is told that he must respect the opinions and prejudices of the natives, and accommodate himself to their notions; and, perceiving one or two customs which he thinks peculiarly judicious, he adopts them *instanter*, and has all his own countrymen up in arms against him, full of wonder that he should so commit himself. Cadets attached to regiments doing duty in small stations, and therefore in a great measure dependent for amusement upon the conversation of the sepoy; and young civilians early qualifying themselves for some responsible office, which sends them into a solitary part of a district, soon become familiar with the causes and meanings of numerous singular observances, of which others less advantageously situated must remain in ignorance all their lives. The officers of king's regiments rarely have an opportunity of making themselves thoroughly acquainted with the curious network of Indian society,

and the contempt with which the least intellectual portion of this body affect to treat those in the service of the Company, is returned by persons who see them constantly committing some solecism, which must ruin them in the estimation of the Asiatics.

One very great advantage resulting from an accurate knowledge of native habits, is the power it gives of choosing dependants from amongst the most respectable classes, and of knowing how far they ought to be indulged in their respective prejudices. Persons of probity and character are too happy to take service under employers, who will permit them the peaceable exercise of the customs of their forefathers, and these people will not presume beyond the proper forbearing point, because they know that they will be instantly detected in the affectation of scruples which are not sanctioned by their religion. A Mussulman, continually infringing the laws of the prophet by indulging in fermented liquor, will often endeavour to display his fastidious feelings by refusing to put pork or ham upon the table, while the more orthodox, aware that a prayer and an ablution will purify them, never object to this piece of service. A chuprassee, who wore the triple thread, and prided himself not a little on his Brahminical descent, being desired to take a mango from the dessert, and give it to a parrot in the verandah, declined on account of his caste, and was instantly dismissed the service by his master, who knew that fruit was not included in the prohibition. This man earnestly implored to be restored to his situation, promising never to offend again ; but the example was considered to be salutary as a warning to others, and he was sent away.

There is one danger, however, in early association and intimate acquaintance with the natives; a few weak-minded persons have become so deeply enamoured of the customs and notions of different sects, as to be Hindoos or Mahomedans in every thing except the name. Many abstain from eating beef or pork from principle, and some go so far as to perform their orisons by bathing in the Ganges. But these are extreme cases, though many carry their compliance with the prejudices of the country much too far, since it is better, by setting an example of sobriety and moderation, to attract admiration to the Christian code, both of civil and religious law, than to sanction the creed of Vishnu or Mohammed by conforming too closely to their precepts. Perhaps, in their desire to please and conciliate, many Christians shew too great a respect for idolatry. It would be unwise as well as ungracious to treat Brahma and his followers contemptuously; but the Hindoos would not be offended by the display of a holy horror at the observation of any pagan rite, especially if it were accompanied by some learned exposition of the way in which they have departed from the more simple faith of their ancestors. Nearly all, even the lowest and most ignorant of the Hindoos, concur in the acknowledgment that there is only one God, though they choose to worship him under all his attributes, and many opportunities occur of inculcating the great truths of Christianity, which, though they might not always make a suitable impression, would be received with respect, and taken as excuses for a refusal to pay the remotest degree of deference to the shrines and temples devoted to heathen

deities. It is said that occasion for great scandal has lately been given in Calcutta, by the assistance accorded by English performers of eminence in the native concerts given at the celebration of the festival of the dark goddess Durga. It is possible that these persons, new to the country, were not aware that they were actually engaged in doing honour to the most horrid rites which ever brought disgrace upon the name of religion; the choice of Handel's music completed the profanation, though perchance intended as a salvo to the conscience. Had the performers been forced into the service, they would have been justified in raising an anthem to the true God, in the midst of the impious choruses of nautch girls of the most abandoned character; but where the inducement to appear in such contaminating company, was merely of a mercenary nature, the selection could excite nothing save disgust.

The most eminent griffins upon record have been colonels of regiments, and general officers, newly arrived in India. One of the former is said to have sent to the office of the Commander-in-chief to request that a "*cool station*" might be selected for his corps; and the commandant of a large brigade, hearing continually of the allowance for *doolees* (palanquins), inquired what sort of "animals" they were, since they seemed to eat so much. It was an act of griffinism never to be forgotten on the part of Bishop Heber, in partaking of the turtle fished up out of the Ganges by his boat's crew. Turtles are never eaten by Europeans in India, unless they have been transported in the early part of their existence to a tank, and thus secured from feeding on the offal of the river. Some persons will

be equally scrupulous with regard to fish ; and, certainly, it is more satisfactory to see the table supplied from a piece of water kept as nearly as possible from every kind of contamination, than to run the risk of a method of fattening abhorrent to every feeling.

The manner in which many persons are puzzled in getting for the first time into a palanquin, affords great amusement to the uninitiated. It is certainly a strange operation, difficult even to those who have been accustomed to scramble into a cot. An adept in the art will have the vehicle held sideways, at a little distance from the ground, and, seating himself at the edge, will be jerked in by the bearers as they turn it into a horizontal position. In alighting they will in the same way be in a manner thrown out by the sudden turning of the palanquin. The griffin, seeing a person thus ejected, is inclined to laugh ; but it forms the perfection of the exit and the entrance, and cannot be attained without some skill and training. A griffin, unadvisedly attempting to sit down in the nonchalant manner of an experienced traveller, might get a very awkward fall, similar to that which awaits the person who erroneously fancies that there is a chair behind him ; the descent is more easy, though some dexterity is required in alighting feet foremost. The safest way of getting either in or out, is to have the palanquin placed upon the ground ; but even here the griffin is liable to some errors of judgment. There is a shelf at one end, which is occasionally mistaken for a seat, and the unhappy wight, obliged to double himself up, performs his transit in the most uncomfortable manner possible. An easier blunder

still is to get in the wrong way, and to sit or lie backwards in the vehicle, with head, instead of feet, foremost. There are always friends or acquaintances on the watch, to see how the tyro will acquit himself, and to assail his ignorance with shouts of laughter. Old Indians are exceedingly averse to give instructions, except in the form of remonstrance, at errors unadvisedly committed; they dislike the trouble of translating for the benefit of those who are ignorant of Hindoostanee, and the difficulties of a new-comer are considerably augmented by the unwillingness of experienced residents to afford them assistance. Ladies especially suffer a great deal of inconvenience from their inability to understand others, or to make themselves understood; and nothing can be more helpless than the situation of a married couple landing for the first time in their lives in Calcutta, and perplexed on all sides by the novelty and strangeness of their condition. Those who had letters of introduction which procured immediate invitations to houses well supplied with all the comforts and luxuries of life, were, of course, exempted from many annoyances; but all, even in the best days of Anglo-Indian hospitality and splendour, were not so fortunate. Hotels and boarding-houses, those refuges for the destitute in acquaintance though not in purse, did not exist, or were of too disreputable an order to afford a desirable shelter. An unfurnished mansion, or equally empty quarters in Fort-William, or some other government edifice, received the strangers, who found themselves and their baggage suddenly put into a comfortless apartment, and in the forlorn aspect of their abode,

and the confused jargon of the native multitude crowding in upon the scene, could scarcely hope that time, patience, and assiduity would ever bring comfort and order in their train. When children were added to the party, and night approaching before the cover of a roof could be obtained, the miseries to be endured sustained a considerable increase, and even in less melancholy situations there is much exercise for fortitude and resignation. It is always desirable that a female servant should sleep in the same apartment with a young lady who is a stranger to the country, or at any rate that some domestic should be within call; for otherwise she may, even if possessed of considerable nerve and powers of endurance, be exposed to much annoyance.

An instance occurring in the days of the writer's griffinism will shew the sort of dilemmas which sometimes occur. It was during the rains, and the French windows, as is usual on fine nights, were left open, the venetians only being closed. Suddenly, a north-wester came on, with great violence; the wind whistled through the apartment and the rain descended on my bed, while peals of thunder shook the whole house, and the lightning glared in the most terrific manner. My first impulse was to rise and shut the windows, but ignorant of the manner in which they were fastened back, they resisted my efforts. I then took a pillow and a shawl and retreated to a distant corner, but the peltings of the pitiless storm pursued me in this remote place; the rain was literally driven through the blinds to the whole extent of a very large room, and it was in vain that I exerted my voice to call some

one to my assistance: the noise of the whirlwind, and the constant pealing of the thunder, effectually baffled every attempt I could make to be heard. I might have taken refuge in the adjoining apartments; but I felt unwilling to appear *griffish*, as it is called, before the family. They must have been awakened by the storm, but they made no inquiry how I fared, and I therefore waited with all the patience I could muster until it ended; then, taking the precaution of laying a shawl over my damp bed, returned to it, wearied out with the fatigue of pacing about for so long a time. A previous adventure had been scarcely less disagreeable. Upon landing at day-break at Fultah, a place about half-way to Calcutta, from a budgerow sent to fetch our party from the ship, which lay at anchor in Saugor roads, I was ushered with an European servant into an apartment, which had a bed in it, but which in my opinion resembled a large cage, being surrounded on all sides by venetian blinds, with each bar open to its widest extent. To those who are unacquainted with the method of turning these gigantic jalousies, it is quite impossible to stir them from the position in which they have been placed, and a tolerably clever person, unacquainted with mechanical contrivance, might puzzle for a long time without solving the mystery; at least, it was quite beyond my powers of comprehension. The servant was equally at a loss, and we had no words to explain our wishes to the people in the ante-chambers, who regarded us both with an air of great curiosity, surprised no doubt that we should choose so much publicity. I put on a dressing-gown and lay down,

but when it was time to rise, found the greatest difficulty in managing to screen off one corner for the performance of the toilette; so necessary after an attempt to sleep in my clothes. Upon proceeding to the apartment in which breakfast was laid, I perceived that all the other sleeping-rooms, though surrounded in the same manner with venetians, were completely closed, and their interiors impervious to view. It must, therefore, have appeared to the native servants of the establishment that I had volunteered the exhibition. Fortunately, my waiting-maid was the only European who was aware of the circumstance, and I lost no time in acquiring the method of closing the venetians myself, and of directing others to do so, it being rather a difficult operation, requiring both strength and dexterity in the management. I recollect looking about on this, my first morning in India, with the most intense curiosity for some of the strange products of the soil, and was disappointed upon a nearer examination of a large column of insects marching across the verandah, to find that they were nothing more than common black-beetles. I regretted to perceive that the crows, the only birds which it was my fortune to meet, very closely resembled their European brethren, and though I did not expect to see tigers reposing in the fields instead of sheep, I had hoped for some novelty in the way of a zoological specimen. I recollect once at Cawnpore, when dining at the house of a commandant, standing upon a terrace, at the time in which the government camel came up with the daily orders, a gentleman of the party said to his wife (both having arrived that day

at the station from England), "that is a camel, my dear;" most of the company laughed, exclaiming "what a griffin!" How the lady could have travelled all the way to Cawnpore without having seen a camel, certainly appeared strange; but my own experience told me that it was necessary to wait with patience for some of the promised *spectacles* of an Indian land. Though nearly the whole of Bengal swarms with tigers, I never had the good fortune to see one in its wild unfettered state, and always envied those friends who were more favoured in their researches. One of my acquaintance had a glorious opportunity of gazing at a group of these majestic animals. He was travelling in a cabriolet through a wild part of the Upper Provinces, attended by a party of mounted *suwars*. One of these men, pointing to the summit of a rocky ravine, drew his attention to four tigers, one of which was reposing with its fore-feet hanging over the ledge, in the same way in which a cat is often seen upon a wall. All four were lying down, but, after a minute, one got up, shook himself lazily, and walked slowly away; a second then rose, and as there was a very suspicious-looking pathway winding down to the road, my friend thought it full time to proceed. Sending back one of the *suwars* to warn his servants, who were following in a more exposed manner, to take a different direction, he whipped up his horse and was soon beyond the danger of an attack. Sometimes, a new arrival in Calcutta will see a tolerably sized alligator alive, and bound securely upon bamboos, the prize of some fishermen, carried through the streets; but it is only griffins who imagine the exhi-

bition to be one of common occurrence. Elephants are not allowed to come within the precincts of the city, excepting when in the train of a native prince proceeding in state to visit the Governor-general. It is supposed that they would occasion accidents by frightening the horses, the two animals having, it is said, a great aversion to each other. An elephant, unless very well accustomed to it, dislikes the pattering and clattering of a horse's hoofs, and the horse is startled by the uncouthness of the elephant's appearance; both, however, when used to each other, will get on very well together, and there is generally a promiscuous jumble in all the native *suwarrees*. Camels are seldom found in Bengal, the wet clayey soil not agreeing with their peculiar conformation; but the griffin may be amused by the singular appearance of the humped and dewlapped cattle. There is a peculiarly small breed, called Gynees, which strike a stranger's eye immediately; they are not much larger than Newfoundland dogs, and look very picturesque either singly or in groups.

There are few things more surprising in the days of our griffinage than the manner in which household goods are conveyed from one place to another, especially in short distances, where carts and beasts of burthen are unnecessary. When the servants have packed every thing ready for starting, a rabble rout of *coolies*, or porters, are admitted into the house. These people, who ply in the streets and bazaars for employment, are of both sexes, and all ages, down to the merest children; their clothing is wretched and ragged in the extreme, particularly that of the

women, which, being more abundant, affords a greater display of misery. The graceful *saree*, composed of a long piece of dirty, tattered, dark cloth, covering the person, it is true, but so scantily, that we wonder how a human being can be contained in it, is divested of all its elegance when enveloping a poor, lean, desolate-looking creature, who, if young, is withered before her time by toil and privation; the children are equally forlorn in their appearance, and the whole troop form an assembly which one should not dream of seeing in any decent house. However, in they all come; rush through the rooms, and seize upon all the articles, with shouts and cries, and eager gesticulations, choosing the heaviest burthens, under the idea that they will be the most likely to retain possession of them, and fighting with each other and every body else who may come in their way. I was once surprised by an irruption of this nature. We had been staying so long at the house of a friend, about two miles from the river, that almost all our baggage and furniture had been brought up from the budgerow. When about to re-embark, they had been got ready for removal. Seated on a sofa, in my chamber, in the midst of packages, and playing with a favourite bird, a band, of thirty persons at least, rushed in, jabbering, scuffling and hallooing; one snatched away the bird-cage, another pushed me aside to get at a bundle; in short, I was surrounded, elbowed and jostled about, until, though not frightened by this strange treatment, I was a good deal annoyed by the juxta-position with dirt and not very agreeable odours. At length my *khidmutghar*, perceiving my situation, came to my

assistance, and, extricating me from the hands of the *coolies*, conducted me into a quiet apartment. These people never take advantage of the confusion they create to rob those who employ them ; all the goods are faithfully conveyed to the place of their destination ; the sole difficulty being to apportion the proper quantity to each, and to engage the services of those only who may be actually wanted ; for, if left to themselves, there would be no end to their numbers. Notwithstanding the vigilance of the servants, who take care to see that each has a suitable load, it is sometimes ludicrous to examine the parcels which many will contrive to get hold of, in order to entitle them to their hire ; and, if they have actually carried any thing, they are clamorous for the payment of their wages, and will make the court-yards ring again with their vehement demands for justice.

Another of my adventures was rather more alarming. I had left a house in Chowringee to return home at night, in company with another palanquin, and having the attendance of a chuprassy, when by some mischance the bearers took a wrong turning, and bewildered themselves amongst new buildings at the outskirts of this fashionable suburb. They put the palanquin down once or twice, then confabulated with each other, and at length carried me beyond the houses. Not knowing a single word of the language, and therefore unable to give any directions, I confess that I felt exceedingly nervous, being afraid that the bearers would leave me to spend the night in the company of the jackals, which were howling at no great distance. I was not afraid of being murdered,

as they could have no object in taking my life ; but I had heard that bearers were apt to run away in any dilemma, and I was apprehensive that they would pursue that course upon the present occasion. At last, after nearly an hour had been passed in consultation and quarrelling, they carried me back to the house which I had quitted ; and, still at a loss to make the servants acquainted with the circumstances of the case, I got out of the palanquin, and meeting the master of the mansion in the hall, who had been hastily summoned to attend the beebee saib, explained the mystery of my re-appearance. He sent one of his own people home with me, and no serious consequences ensued from the terrors I had suffered.

Since the establishment of steam-vessels, the half-way house at Fultah, before-mentioned, has been abandoned on account of the decline of its custom ; formerly, it was the only hotel which respectable persons could frequent ; and as parties could seldom embark or disembark in a single tide, it was necessary to have some place where refreshment and repose could be procured : no other house of public entertainment, however, found toleration during its existence. At length, the great inconvenience of having to set up an establishment which was both costly and comfortless, during a temporary residence in Calcutta, induced many respectable persons who had more wisdom than money, to patronize a boarding-house, which was conducted upon very liberal principles. The mistress of the mansion, a well-descended, well-educated woman, was universally respected ; and, in order to render her establishment a fitting abode

for young ladies placed under her care, she did not receive any gentlemen excepting those who were accompanied by their wives. The house was large and commodious, and families could be accommodated with suites of apartments, independent of the common sitting-rooms. The success attending this undertaking induced many other persons to set up similar establishments, differing somewhat in plan; the hire of an apartment for a single person with board, including every thing but wine and beer, averaged a hundred rupees (£10) per month, and the experiment being found to answer, hotels were attempted in various parts of Calcutta. Whether they were all successful or not, must be doubtful; but an enterprising person of the name of Spence, who has set up a splendid establishment of the kind in Wellesley Place, seems to receive all the patronage which he so justly merits. The premises consist of three houses, which fortunately were all under one roof, each three stories in height, and admirably adapted for his purpose. Each family can be provided with a suite of apartments, consisting of a bed-room, sitting-room, and bathing-room; three meals a day, and attendance, at the rate of £25 a month. Bachelors are accommodated with a sleeping-chamber, and a seat at an excellent public table, for £10 a month. The house is closed at ten at night, and none except respectable persons are admitted as inmates. There is no billiard-table, nor any other amusement allowed which might lead to noise or intemperance; and the excellence of the regulations has rendered it the resort of civil and military servants of the highest orders.

The influx of strangers in Calcutta has been exceedingly useful in making inroads upon customs and manners which appeared to have been as immutable as the laws of the Medes and the Persians. Amongst many advantages resulting from the importation of new notions, upon domestic as well as political economy, that of a salutary reform in the conduct of the table is one of the most conspicuous. People, according to the latest accounts, have begun to grow a little more rational upon the subject, and no longer fancy that abundance will atone for inelegance. When the number of ladies resident in India shall be better proportioned to the multitude of the other sex, there can be little doubt that still further improvements will be manifested; for though at all times ready to acknowledge the excellence of Indian cookery, and the merits of its *artistes*, yet it must be admitted that there is still a good deal to be done, which can only be effected by female superintendence. To descend to particulars, for which no apology can be needed, since the importance of gastronomical science is universally allowed, the two grand drawbacks to the excellence of Indian cookery, are the absence of European potherbs, and of bacon, in its various concoctions. Sweet herbs of every kind will grow in India, but not very freely, excepting when considerable pains are taken in the cultivation; the substitutes employed by the natives are strong, and of a peculiar flavour, which is too apt to preponderate. Though the name in all probability refers to the kitchen, rather than to the garden-pot, herbs might be raised by the persevering without much assistance from a gardener; and their more fre-

quent introduction into stews of all kinds, would very materially add to the zest of the dish. The cooks being all Mahomedans, they never willingly exercise their talents upon bacon, that useful adjunct to the English *cuisine*; and without some knowledge of the art, on the part of their employers, none of the modern improvements, nor any great variety in the courses, can be attained. These kind of household cares and useful branches of domestic knowledge, do not, unfortunately, enter into the modern system of education, though even in England, unless where families are rich enough to keep first-rate domestics, they are often required; and in India an acquaintance with them would be exceedingly valuable. The management of a garden, the method of rearing vegetables and flowers, as practised in Europe, would tend greatly to the improvement of the exotics; and some idea, should the knowledge be only theoretical, of conducting a poultry-yard or dairy, would be turned to advantage. The butter made in India is sweet and well-tasted; but, notwithstanding the assistance of saltpetre, never acquires the proper degree of hardness and consistence, unless the cows should be fed under European superintendence; when this is the case, nothing can be finer than the product; and gentlemen, as well as ladies, contemplating a voyage to India, would do well to turn their attention to these subjects.

Although our eastern colonies are naturally the home of great numbers of young ladies, whose parents have little chance of ever returning to their native country, it is still the fashion to consider every female who goes out to India in the light of an adventuress,

anxious to try her fortune in the matrimonial market. Unhappily, the greater number who visit either of the presidencies have no choice in the matter ; they have not the means of living at home ; many are solely dependent upon the Orphan Fund ; and though the mother may survive, and have a pension sufficient for her maintenance, as it will cease at her death, she is obliged to take her daughter out to a place in which, according to government regulations, they must be provided for. The majority of young women who are induced to accompany their married sisters to India, or who go out to some distant relation, feel themselves in a great measure compelled to do so from the pressure of circumstances ; they have no idea, when they embark upon their voyage, that their comfort and happiness will in a great measure depend upon their marrying, and that to remain single is looked upon either as a crime or a reproach ; a crime, should it be voluntary, and a reproach, should there be any suspicion to the contrary. Some few fortunate women there are, who, having happy homes in India, which they feel no desire to exchange, have the option of remaining single ; and others are equally fortunate in the means of returning home ; but the greater number, irrevocably bound to the country, have little choice on the subject ; and that there are not more unhappy marriages than can be recorded in the East, must be owing to the grateful feelings which kind and affectionate treatment usually inspire in female hearts. When young women do not marry in India, or return from it without entering the holy pale, it is said that the market is overstocked ; people

in England cannot imagine any other cause ; and perhaps, until women of good birth and education are permitted to embark in mercantile pursuits, and carve out their own fortunes in life, those who are poor and dependent must always submit to the imputation of husband-hunting. It would be very difficult, in the present state of Anglo-Indian society, to find wives for half the marrying men ; and unless some very powerful prejudice should have been raised against a lady having proper introductions, her remaining single must be solely a matter of choice. She may, perhaps, desire to marry for love, and not meet a person who can inspire her with the feeling ; or she may be ambitious, and find no object to gratify that ambition ; at any rate, her state of spinsterhood does not proceed from there being too many competitors in the field. India will be a more agreeable country to live in when the number of women resident there, shall bear a greater proportion to that of the masculine gender ; for those who think otherwise pay a very poor compliment to the sex, and attach little value to the moral and intellectual benefits which female influence confers upon society. Whatever may be at present amiss in the prevailing tone, must be attributable to the sex which has held sovereign sway in India during many a long year. And it is curious, notwithstanding the homage said to be paid to the ladies, to observe many slight evidences, which show that they have not yet attained the position which they occupy in England. A griffin is rather surprised to see the great deference paid by the servants to the master

of the house ; he is upon all occasions considered first by them, and has to make frequent apologies to his female guests for the attention he receives to their prejudice. The natives have an idea that women are inferior animals, and treat them accordingly ; they are not allowed to eat until their lords and masters have been served, the refuse of the entertainment being considered good enough for them ; and the domestics of an Anglo-Indian household, entertaining this idea, will always help the gentlemen of the family first, if permitted. Probably, through idleness or inadvertence, they are suffered to have their own way in a great many instances ; but the ladies do well who insist upon their prerogative ; and the servants are much more respectful when compelled to regard the mistress of the house as chief in her own department. The surprise occasioned by the first lessons given to the domestics is often exceedingly ludicrous ; they see their master submit, as a matter of course, to the new order of things which the beebee saib has established ; and they are forthwith amazed at her importance. A woman, in these instances, may disregard Pope's injunction, and "*shew* she rules ;" amiability and elegance, however, ought to be united to the determination to uphold her rights, or otherwise she will lose the power of convincing her dependents that European customs are to be preferred to those of the Asiatics. An English lady should not permit a native to ill-treat his wife in her presence, or within her hearing ; a look of surprise and displeasure will arrest the uplifted arm, and though gentlemen may feel some degree of sympathy for the provoked husband,

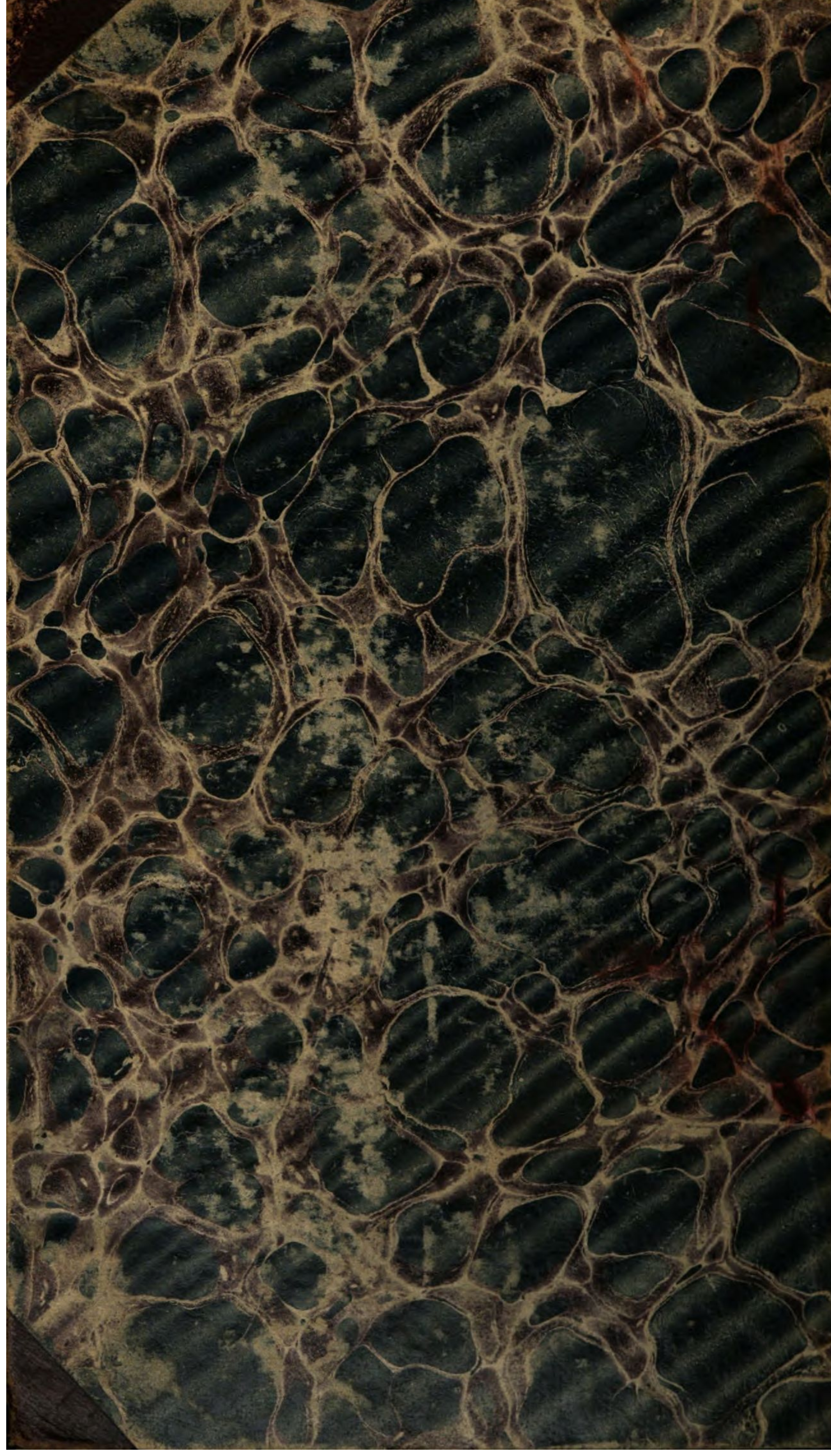
the ladies should resolutely protect their own sex from blows, and insist upon the dismissal of those domestics from their service who are addicted to beating their wives. The majority of English ladies go out to India so very young, and are so completely under control when they arrive there, that their timidity and inexperience induce them to comply with the usual routine ; and few, especially in the days of their griffinage, dream of rebellion.



THE END.

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